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FOUR AMERICAN PARTY LEADERS

HENRY WARD BEECHER FOUNDATION LECTURES
DELIVERED AT AMHERST COLLEGE

BY

CHARLES EDWARD MERRIAM

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UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

New York
THE MACMILLAN COMPANY
1926

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Set up and printed.
Published March, 1926.

Printed in the United States of America by
J. J. LITTLE AND IVES COMPANY, NEW YORK

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TO SUSAN

INTRODUCTION

Leadership is one of the basic factors in the organization of life, and its implications are everywhere of profound significance. Wherever we look, whether among plants, animals or humans, we find dominant centers emerging and the relations of dominance and subordination developing. This is universally true, whether we are dealing with the simplest and most elementary types of existence or the most complex forms of social and political organization. In the plant and animal worlds these functions have been studied intimately by many careful and persistent workers; but in the higher forms of social and political life much less careful attention has been given to the analysis of the nature and effects of these relations.[1]

"Long ago we ceased to believe that rulers governed because they were the sons or blood relations

[1] See C. M. Child, *Physiological Foundations of Behavior,* Chapter X; C. J. Herrick, *Neurological Foundations of Animal Behavior,* Chapter XVIII; W. M. Wheeler, *Social Life Among Insects.*

of gods; or even that they ruled by special divine right.[2] 'The mystery that doth hedge about' a king has largely been dispelled, and with it the lesser lights around the throne. It may still be assumed, however, that there is some other kind of a mystery that surrounds a leader of men, some magic that grows out of mysterious 'human nature,' and defies human analysis and understanding. Political leaders, some believe, are supermen, inscrutable, insoluble types, to be accepted as in the earlier times earthquakes, volcanoes, storms, or other works of nature were accepted.

" 'Human nature,' however, is no more of a defense against modern science than 'divine right' in the earlier period of human development, for the whole trend of modern social science is toward the discovery of the secrets or rather the sequences of 'human nature.' We no longer look upon the human beings who may be our masters with superstitious awe, but rather with scientific curiosity as to how they are constructed and how they operate, and with determination to reduce the mysterious to its very lowest terms. The 'great man' is not merely a hero to be worshipped as if in some occult way endowed with semi-divine attributes, but he (or she)

[2] Quoted from my "Introduction" to H. F. Gosnell's *Boss Platt.*

presents a problem, a situation to be analyzed and explained. His biological inheritances, his social environment, his social training, his life experience, his developed traits and characteristics, measured as closely as may be and with increasing precision;—these are the factors from which the great man may be understood; and with them the less great and the near great. This is as true of the great man or the leader in the political world as in any other field of the larger social world.

"In the last generation increasing attention was given to the examination of the social origins and environment of leaders, following Carlyle's period of hero worship and great man adoration. In the present generation increasing attention is being given not only to the social entourage out of which the leader comes, but also to the analysis of the individual qualities of the leader, and finally to the interrelation of these qualities to the environment. We want to know what sort of an environment makes a Lincoln or a Roosevelt, and also what the special qualities of these types are, as they may have come out of inheritance or been shaped by environment and experience, and to know how these special traits or types of behavior react upon the environment.

"Inevitably the study of leaders involves the study of followers as well, and, indeed, the whole question of the political interests of man. How these interests originate, develop and decline; what determines their strength and direction; within what limits they may be adapted and adjusted;—these are all questions which must be answered before we can solve the riddle of leadership. For the attractiveness of the leader and the attraction of the follower are the same phenomena, viewed from different sides. They are types of reciprocal forces, producing political tropisms, which are the worthy subjects of scientific inquiry, however difficult the precise approach may be. Why men obey or do not; why they incline toward conformity or dissent; why they tend to lead or follow in certain circumstances;—these are fundamental questions of politics, and they are likely to be given the most thorough examination within the next few years. They are problems lying at the basis of any system of government, whether aristocratic, democratic, or communistic, and only upon a thorough understanding of the political side of human nature can a science of politics or a prudent art of government and statesmanship be built.

"It is true that party leadership is not a thing apart, and that it has many intimate relationships

with other types of leadership in other fields of social life. Perhaps there is much of kin in the general, the cardinal, the magnate and the political leader or boss. The development of psychology is likely to throw much light upon this subject in the next few years, and, of course, the literature of political leadership will be correspondingly enriched. But the special study of the political types of leadership will always remain an object of inquiry by the political scientists."

In my volume on the *American Party System*, I traced the common qualities of political leaders, and outlined some of the outstanding traits that seemed significant. That analysis was not designed, however, to be an exhaustive examination of the topic, but suggestive of the possibilities of more minute research in this field. In addition to the possession of certain other basic qualities I suggested the following as a working list of the common attributes of the political leader.

1. Unusual sensitiveness to the strength and direction of social and industrial tendencies with reference to their party and political bearings.

2. Acute and quick perception of possible courses of community conduct with prompt action accordingly.

3. Facility in group combination and compromise—political diplomacy in ideas, policies and spoils.

4. Facility in personal contacts with widely varying types of men.

5. Facility in dramatic expression of the sentiment or interest of large groups of voters, usually with voice or pen—fusing a logical formula, an economic interest and a social habit or predisposition in a personality.

6. Courage not unlike that of the military commander whose best laid plans require a dash of luck for their successful completion.

This was intended, however, only as a temporary scaffolding, and has been so used by others and by me. It will be necessary to accumulate many individual studies before much substantial progress can be made. A series of careful studies would make possible much more minute analysis than has hitherto been possible and would pave the way for more careful comparison. It would be desirable to study the background of the leader, the type of community in which he developed and in which he was active politically. It would be necessary to examine the special social, economic and political features of the particular situation in question. It would be im-

portant to scrutinize the beginnings of the leader, his ancestral origins, his parents, his early companions, and surroundings, his early life and his education, recreations, interests, dominant reveries. It would be useful to review his achievements, his training, the history of his career, noting the special forms of success and failure, of attainment and celebrity.

We should find it advantageous to obtain all possible data regarding the physical characteristics of the leader, including the fullest medical history and all possible biological and psychoanalytical data. We should want to know about his size, strength, endurance, health, voice, energy, manner, special tonicities, and a variety of other facts bearing upon the physical foundation of his leadership.

We should inquire into his intellectual and temperamental traits, using all the devices of modern psychology, psychiatry and common sense. We should look for self-assertiveness, strength of conviction, tact, geniality, patience, decisiveness, judiciousness, sense of humor, reputation for goodness of heart, and all other pertinent elements in his constitution. We should in short make every effort, leaving no stone unturned in the attempt to solve the secret of personality still in the main a riddle defying

science. We should not be unmindful of the fact that the qualities of leaders can be determined only when we know also the qualities of non-leaders or followers from whom they are being differentiated. And finally we should want to know more about the problem of leadership as it is found not only in the political field, but also in the broader field of social relations of all sorts and descriptions.

If time permitted we should also examine the technique and tactics of the leader. We might study his employment of the various means of expressing leadership, the use of the press, of oratory, of intrigue, of organization, of favors and spoils, of social prestige, and the other numerous methods of obtaining and holding power.

For the purpose of these lectures it is of course impossible to follow through a detailed analysis of the four leaders to be discussed. What I am setting out to give is only a sketch, not a complete scientific analysis, an outline of a study rather than a perfected inquiry, designed to be suggestive rather than conclusive. Proceeding in this way, it will be possible to trace the social, economic and political background of the particular leader, his personal equipment and traits, to draw certain conclusions and characterizations, and finally as far as time

permits to institute certain comparisons between these leaders.

The four following lectures discussing Abraham Lincoln, Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson and William Jennings Bryan as political leaders, were given at Amherst College in May, 1924, upon the Henry Ward Beecher Foundation. They do not purport to be and are not exhaustive and scientific analyses of these persons, but are an account of certain broad features in the outline of these types. Much farther advance in the analysis of personality and much more complete collection of material will be necessary for a full and satisfactory account of the traits of these interesting individuals. The purpose of these lectures is well served if some interest in the problem of leadership is quickened by them, and further insight into these characters is given. The full interpretation awaits another day.

A word regarding the material upon which these lectures are based. In the case of Mr. Roosevelt, Mr. Wilson and Mr. Bryan, the writer possessed such information as may be derived from observation and personal acquaintance. In addition, this was supplemented by the observations of others, and by such original and secondary printed material as

is available. A few of these sources are indicated at the end of each chapter, but no effort has been made to give in the text detailed documentation of the lectures.

CHARLES EDWARD MERRIAM.

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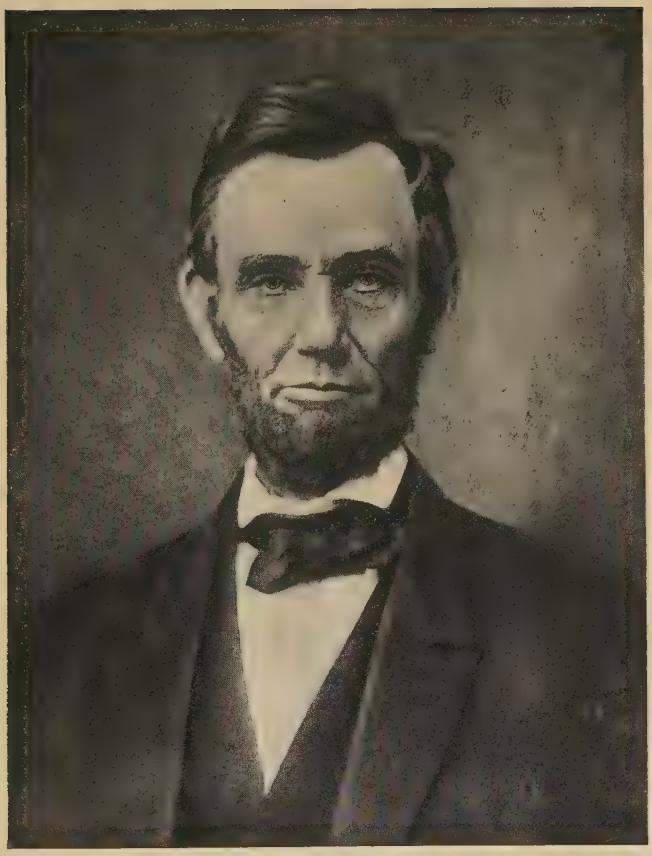
FOUR
AMERICAN PARTY LEADERS



FOUR
AMERICAN PARTY LEADERS

CHAPTER I

ABRAHAM LINCOLN

The national leadership of Lincoln was brief—a span of some seven years, from 1858 to 1865, reaching from the Douglas debates to the tragedy in Washington. Within these few years is crowded one of the most remarkable careers in the whole history of democratic government.

The background of his political activities presented many significant features. There were three principal classes involved in the contemporary struggle for political power, the slaveholders, the manufacturers, the free farmers. The issue was in many ways a contest between free labor and slave labor systems, competing for mastery. Business and free labor were united against a slave labor system —the latter an anachronism curiously surviving in the 19th century. In the final issue their representa-

tive was Lincoln, who came from a state which was free, yet contained a section that was practically unfree because of a system of apprentices.[1] Egypt and Canaan, as the northern and southern sections of the state were called, lay within the borders of one commonwealth, and brought home to Lincoln the different points of view in the nation.

Lincoln himself came from or adopted the lawyer class from which most of the great political leaders had come, Jefferson, Webster, Clay, Calhoun, Marshall. Out of this group were recruited the contemporary advocates of most of the political causes and groups, who found in the logic of the law the political philosophy of the period, expressed by a Davis, a Seward, a Stephens, a Douglas, or a Lincoln.

The early years of Lincoln showed few signs of conspicuous leadership. A member of the Illinois legislature for eight years, he had left no notable record of achievement, and had usually drifted with the tide. A member of Congress for one session, he had not even been a candidate for reëlection, and was apparently a failure at the age of 40. It seemed as if his political career had closed. A candidate for the Governorship of Oregon and later for the

[1] See N. D. Harris, *The History of Negro Servitude in Illinois* (1719-1864).

Commissionership of the General Land Office, he escaped appointment to these relatively undistinguished positions.

By 1856, however, he had emerged as a candidate for the Vice-Presidential nomination, for which he received 110 votes in a total of 539. In the famous debates of 1858 he came into prominence as a powerful figure of national importance and significance, along with Seward, Davis, Douglas, Chase, Fremont, Greeley, and other conspicuous figures in the national political life of the time. In the nomination and election of 1860, he rose to national power and responsibility, through the division of the opposition forces.[2]

At the basis of Lincoln's career lay a foundation of very remarkable physical strength unimpaired by serious illness, by dissipation, or by overwork. Evidences of his physical prowess are abounding and unassailable. We do not have his athletic "records," but we know of his ability as a wrestler, and his proficiency in the rude strength tests of his day.

[2] Lincoln	1,866,352	39.91%
Opposition	2,810,501	60.09%
Douglas	1,375,157	
Breckinridge	847,514	
Bell	587,830	

Wilson received 41.82% of the total vote.

In stature and in strength, he towered above those of his time; and he was well served politically and otherwise by these significant characteristics. They were helpful to him in his career as a circuit rider, as a campaigner, and as a reserve force in the days when the strain of national leadership became intense.

His intellectual equipment was equally powerful. He possessed what Lord Bryce calls the characteristic qualities of the great lawyer, ability to reason from a general principle and clearness and simplicity of exposition and illustration. Yet using constantly the language and the logic of the law, he was nevertheless not its slave but its master, and when occasion required was capable of distinctly non-legal methods of thought and action, as in his attitude toward the Supreme Court and in his war interpretation of the Constitution. Untrained in formal learning he developed, largely by himself, a type of intellectual power, a form of erudition, and a style of expression, of rare distinction.

There were many paradoxes in the personal equipment of Lincoln. Along with a brooding melancholy, the origin of which we do not understand, he possessed a remarkable sense of humor, so that while at times a victim of melancholia in a distressing

and dangerous form, he acquired a reputation as one of the great story-tellers and wits of the time. In most instances a reputation as a "funny man" has interfered with the prestige of statesmanship, but in the case of Lincoln the parable-like character of many of his stories seems to have saved him from a reputation for facetiousness, that otherwise might have been fatal.

There was in his character another striking contrast in the combination of human sympathy and relentless determination. From early childhood he was noted for kindliness, and as a boy was punished for releasing animals from their traps and warning game against the hunters. Noted for the breadth and depth of his human sympathies, which were often the despair of the War Department and the Army, he was nevertheless capable of determining upon and carrying through one of the bloodiest and most desperate civil wars of modern times. His deep sympathies did not lead him to sentimentality, nor did they interfere with the inexorable purpose and methods of war. It is seldom that in one nature these contradictory traits are combined in so remarkable a way.

Another striking feature of his character was the contrast between his own somewhat eccentric and

unorderly habits, and those of the men who became his chief aids. He did not have other Lincolns, but in their stead, a bustling and efficient martinet of the type of Stanton, a dignified figure such as Seward, a cold and calculating type such as Chase, and a spoilsman such as Cameron. While he was masterful in dealing with his Cabinet, he was not exacting in his demands for precise and specific compliance with his wishes, express or implied. On the contrary he permitted, especially on the part of Stanton, types of insubordination and disrespect that would have ruined a less fundamentally masterful man. He undoubtedly possessed a type of personal ascendancy over men which it is very difficult to analyze, but which was evident in his relations with his associates, notably in the case of Seward, who at first regarded himself as the real master of the national situation, but later followed.

Nature had found some short cut to preparedness in the mental make-up of Lincoln, for out of unreadiness he repeatedly sprang straight to high efficiency. He was not prepared for literary expression, but his utterances soon commanded general admiration for their quality of style. He was not prepared for national political leadership, but within a few years he was successfully dominating national

thought. He was not at all prepared for the tasks of administrative supervision, yet he executed them with ability. He was an amateur in military knowledge, yet intuitively sought out many of the weak points in military strategy, and clung to Grant with remarkable insight into his possibilities. He seemed without great difficulty to close the gap between unreadiness and efficiency.

One of the pronounced characteristics of political leaders is that of unusual sensitiveness to currents of political thought and feeling. In Lincoln's day the two great tides of sentiment were those of nationalism and liberty, both of which had risen to high water mark in Western civilization. Clay and Webster had thought of nationalism and slavery as a compromise which statesmanship might and must effect. Douglas thought of nationalism with indifference to slavery as the price of its existence. Lincoln caught the union of nationalistic sentiment with love of freedom, and this powerful sweep of sentiment he represented in his political attitudes and life. He sensed the tremendously powerful movement for American nationality and he also saw that it might and should be coupled with a hatred of slavery and a love of democracy. In this he caught the spirit of his people and of his time.

Nationalism and liberty were slogans in Germany and Italy as well as in America; they were in the course of a world current that was running like a mill race. Slavery could not endure either economically or morally, and nationalism was the most powerful political force of his time and growing stronger as time went on. Within a few years after Appomattox, Italian nationality was to be accomplished in Rome. Likewise the German people were at last to embody the German aspirations toward national unity in the coronation of the Emperor in the palace of Louis XIV in Versailles. In Lincoln's phrase "This nation cannot endure half slave and half free" was expressed the philosophy of his position—the insight into a fundamental problem of the time and the determination to represent the position expressed in his memorable phrase.

Another characteristic of political leaders is their acute perception of possible courses of community action, their invention of ways out—the construction of plans or formulas adapted to community action in the given circumstances. As an inventor, Lincoln took high rank. First of all he invented the formula for resistance to slavery. His plan was not that of acquiescence in dismemberment of the Union, as many suggested, or of abolition of slavery, law or

no law; or of disregard of the American Constitution. His plan for assailing slavery contained legal, economic and moral elements, nicely blended. He first found a legal precedent for opposition to the extension of slavery in the Northwest Territory Ordinance in which the Fathers made the Northwest free and thereby indicated their attitude and policy. He proposed to follow the same line of action, refusing to countenance any further extension of slavery into Federal territory. In the flat declaration that slavery was wrong he found a moral basis of attack. The fashion was to apologize for slavery or to avoid it or to compromise with it. Lincoln recognized the legal status of slavery, but was unwilling to withhold his moral condemnation or to abandon the determination to restrict it to places where then lawful. The wisdom and superiority of free labor over slave labor supplied an economic content for his policy. In his formula, as distinguished from that of other slavery opponents, there was the element of law, of business and of the gospel,—a powerful combination in the political life of any state.

Lincoln "invented" war as the means of action in the great crisis when secession began and the life of the nation hung in the balance. He might have compromised, or remained silently acquiescent. He

made up his mind to unflinching war and all the means that were necessary to that end. This was a hard decision, contrary to the informed judgment of many intelligent people, but it was the way he took; and it proved to be a tenable line of advance, however rough the way might sometimes be. Further he so manœuvred that the offensive must be taken by the South and that when war came it would be an attack upon the property of the Union. He compelled the enemies of the Union to strike the first blow, conscious of the value of a war to defend the common possessions of the nation.

Lincoln invented a merciful plan of reconstruction, which he did not live to see either executed or overthrown. Whether his constructive ability would have been equal to the great task of overcoming the bitterness and vindictiveness of the post-war period we cannot say, but at any rate he was ready with plans and formulas for the reorganization of the suffering nation. Possibly the Radicals might have overwhelmed him and saddened his latter days with frustration and pettiness, but there can be little doubt that he would have been able to present original formulas and plans for the reconstruction which bungling hands delayed for a generation after his death.

Many leaders are strongly endowed with facility in group contacts, with ability to meet and hold together various groups and classes of men, sometimes in apparently impossible situations. Lord Bryce says: "They must sometimes wish that it was possible for them to address their own followers in one tongue and their opponents in another, each uncomprehended by the other, as shepherds in the Scottish Highlands are said to shout their orders to one dog in English and to another in Gaelic." [3]

The fact that Lincoln was a leader during a bloody civil war may be an indication that diplomacy and compromise were not his outstanding traits. Perhaps a supreme diplomat might have held the Union together without a war, prolonging the compromises which Clay and Webster had so long negotiated in great crises. Or perhaps successful diplomacy was impossible under the circumstances in which he came to power. Upon this we can merely speculate.

In two respects, however, Lincoln showed high qualities of group diplomacy, in holding together the diverse elements favoring the Union, and in avoiding European complications. The abolitionists and the non-abolitionists, the Republicans and the Demo-

[3] *Modern Democracies*, I, 118.

crats, were not an easy team to drive, and at times it seemed as though it would be impossible to avoid a breach between them. This was notably true in the question whether emancipation should be immediate or ultimate, and it required diplomacy of the highest order to hold together the friends of the Union through this troubled scene until the moral demand of the abolitionist might be translated into a war measure. Nor was it always easy to reconcile the claims of Republicans and Democrats who had dropped their partisan differences in order, under the name of the Union party, to prevent the dissolution of the nation itself. The construction of the Lincoln cabinet and the maintenance of friendly relations between the Union factions showed diplomatic ability of a high order.

The War might readily have been lost by a few mistaken moves in the European game of diplomacy. It would have been easy to embroil England in our local controversy and bring about recognition of the Southern Confederacy with perhaps still more open methods of aid to the South. The steady hand of Lincoln, with the aid of his diplomatic representatives, averted this danger, often an imminent one, and made it possible to carry on, as he said, only one war at a time. A rasher and more hasty spirit,

however, would have precipitated an Anglo-American conflict, in the course of which the Union would have been destroyed.

In personal contacts which are so large a part of the leader's equipment Lincoln was marvelously strong. The element of human sympathy in his make-up was evident and irresistible. Lincoln was not merely admired by those who met him, not merely a genial person whose magnetism attracted individuals. There was a quality beyond this in him. Men admired his ability and followed his plans, but more than that they grieved for him personally. They lavished upon him sympathy and devotion such as few men receive. They yearned for him and sorrowed with him, while at other times paradoxically they rollicked with him in those astonishing bursts of humor that arose from the background of this melancholy nature. No man in American public life ever possessed in an equal measure this faculty of inspiring the devotion and regard of masses of men. This was moreover not merely a quality that sufficed to draw men to him. Lincoln possessed a profound knowledge of men and understood them when they did come to him. He seemed at times to have the penetrating faculty of the psychiatrist in his ability to interpret the

thoughts and emotions of those with whom he came in contact. This quality of sympathy and understanding made it possible for him to gain the confidence of Douglas, to hold the interest and loyalty of Seward, to deal with the fussy Stanton, and to manage the austere and calculating Chase. Without it he would have been helpless on many occasions when the storms descended upon him in the darker hours of the war.

Another significant quality of political leaders is facility in dramatic expression. Its most common forms are with tongue or pen, but it may also be evidenced in broad lines of conduct. Lincoln was both an orator and a writer of high quality. As an orator he was able to reach and influence thousands of citizens, impressing them with his sincerity and ability, defending and expounding his plans for national action. His voice was said to have been somewhat high and shrill, but whatever its quality it was a useful and effective voice capable of carrying his message in great outdoor meetings to thousands of people who came to listen to him. In no sense a graceful or highly dramatic orator, he was nevertheless one of the most powerful political speakers of his time, meeting the real test of the orator, that of actually arousing and interesting men

and swaying their opinions and convictions. The Lincoln-Douglas debates were spectacular in character, and illustrate the singular power of Lincoln, especially in view of the fact that Douglas was an orator and debater of unusual skill, and as the examination of the debates reveals clearly a most formidable foe. The clash of wits on the plains of Illinois in the campaign of 1858 was a memorable battle between antagonists of the very highest skill; —debaters and popular orators capable of holding the attention of restless audiences of many thousands of persons.

As a writer Lincoln possessed even higher power than as an orator. Many of his phrases were winged words that carried far. He understood how to express in concise form the sentiment of thousands waiting for the word to represent their ideas. "This nation cannot endure half slave and half free" was a phrase that lived long in current political discussion, and was significant in the life of the nation. "He who would be no slave must consent to have no slave" was another phrase pregnant with meaning. The Gettysburg address has been immortalized, and its words have become a part not only of national but of world literature. As a formulator of phrases containing both law and poetry, Lincoln

was able to catch the spirit of the national life or of a large section of it and translate it into current political use and expression.

Finally a characteristic quality of the more significant political leaders has been that of courage. It has commonly been assumed that the chief characteristic of the genus political is that of compromise and evasion, as a condition precedent to the maintenance of political life. But this is only half of the case, for no great leader or boss for that matter long holds power without battles in which he risks his all. No business man acquires a fortune by investing everything in bonds, nor does a political leader advance by always avoiding battle. At any rate he must stand ready to defend whatever he calls his, whether principles or plunder. It was Roosevelt who said that only those are fit to live who do not fear to die.

The high courage of Lincoln was in evidence on many occasions, testing his quality in the extreme. Among these cases were the Mexican War, the debate of 1858 with Douglas, the criticism of the Supreme Court of the United States, the decision for war, the issuance of the Emancipation Proclamation.

Lincoln as a member of Congress was opposed to the Mexican War, which he regarded as unnecessary

and unjust.[4] The famous "Spot Resolution" introduced in Congress by Representative Lincoln was an attack on the President, questioning whether American blood was shed on a spot within our territory.[5] If this resolution were not answered, said Representative Lincoln, "he should then be fully convinced of what he more than half suspected, that the President was deeply conscious of being in the wrong in this matter; that he felt the blood of this War, like the blood of Abel was crying from the ground against him." This action cost Lincoln much of his popularity, and was a prime cause for Lincoln's retirement from Congress at the end of his first term.

The debates with Douglas were a supreme test of Lincoln's courage, not only because of the immense prestige of his opponent, who might have crushed his less experienced antagonist, but secondly because of the insistence of Lincoln that the nation "could not endure half slave and half free," thereby alienating support otherwise available.

The courage of Lincoln was also demonstrated in his unsparing attack upon the Supreme Court in the Dred Scott case. The statement of Lincoln was

[4] Compare the opinion of General Grant in his *Memoirs,* I, 53.
[5] See *Congressional Globe,* 30th Congress, 1st Session, p. 64.

temperate and it was entirely within his rights as a lawyer and a citizen, but it was the act of a brave man and not of a temporizer. As in the case of Jefferson, Jackson, and Roosevelt, Lincoln found it necessary to set his views against those of the supreme tribunal on broad questions of public policy, and he did not hesitate to meet the issue.

"We think," said he, "the Dred Scott decision is erroneous. We know the court that made it has often overruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it overrule this. We offer no resistance to it." [6]

The decision to make war and the decision to hold Fort Sumter were again occasions which tested the nerve and courage of the President. Likewise the determination to issue the Emancipation called for resolution of a high type. The maintenance of a strong position through the most difficult times of the War was further evidence of a courageous spirit not easily daunted by adverse circumstances.

The outstanding qualities of Lincoln were his basic equipment of a powerful body and mind, with a temperament singularly combining somber melancholy and exuberant humor. His strongest attributes were his facility in personal contacts and his power of dramatic expression of ideas and policies.

[6] *Works,* I, 228, and Lincoln-Douglas debates, *passim.*

In both of these particulars he possessed not merely ability, but genius far transcending ordinary endowment. In group diplomacy he was less notable, but yet not so significantly superior as in other characteristics. His inventive faculty was higher than is generally observed, and his ways out of distressing situations were both ingenious and well adapted to recognition and acceptance by the community.

The martyr death of Lincoln closed the book of destiny for him and enshrined his name in the memory of the nation. Yet at the same time Lincoln was saved from a period of trial in many ways more difficult for one of his qualifications and temperament than any through which he had passed. He escaped the bitterness of the ungenerous reconstruction period, and leaders already eyeing him with doubt. That men like Thaddeus Stevens would have overwhelmed Lincoln now seems impossible, but the assaults upon Wilson at the end of the Great War indicate that the gratitude due to leaders is not always long-lived. Likewise he escaped the struggle between capital and labor, beginning at the close of the War and causing new divisions of human interest and allegiance among his friends. He came too late for the great Bank struggle in which Jackson had played so conspicuous a part and too early for

the later struggles over currency and corporations. His great work for Nationalism and Liberty was done, and no greater opportunity could come to a life already crowned with rich and imperishable achievement.

As a political leader working under the forms of democratic government, Lincoln was a unique figure. As a successful leader of a great nationalist movement in one of its most significant phases, and as the emancipator of an oppressed race, he had a share in human advances that are fundamentally important. But that was not all. He created a type for democracy, a symbol, a figure, an incarnation of the spirit and sentiment of human fellowship and democracy that far transcends specific achievement, however splendid and imposing. He somehow caught the spirit of our common life, embodying and expressing the unspoken but deep-rooted faith of men in a finer and more human future. He became not merely the jurist and the statesman, but also the poet, the hope, the aspiration of democracy. The unfree, the oppressed, the bruised and crushed, and they are many in many walks of life, looked and still look to him as an emancipator type. If he did not free them, he was a prophet of an era they hoped and dreamed would some day come. So it was that

in Russia or Italy or England or other countries where America has stood for all the dreams that have not come true in the hard lives of men and women, Lincoln was the human being who stood for these hopes unrealized and perhaps never to be realized. Thus a national leader, he became an international type; emancipator of slaves, his life came as a breath of hope to all those in chains everywhere; a foe of one form of hateful privilege, he became the ideal of all those oppressed by any privileged group.

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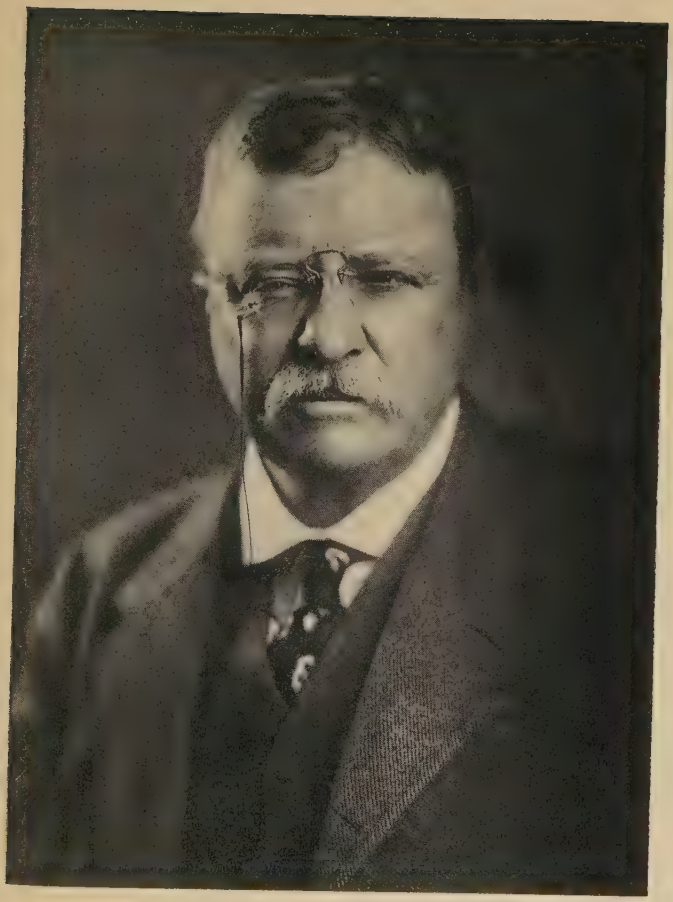
CHAPTER II

THEODORE ROOSEVELT

The period of Roosevelt, Wilson and Bryan extends from about 1890 to 1920. A bird's eye view of the outstanding features of the time will illuminate the position of these three figures in American public life.

Both internally and externally there were significant developments during this period. Our national life was marked by struggles over the basis of economic and political power. Among these were the battle over the tariff, the struggle over the currency, the contest over trust regulation, the issue over taxation, and the less partisan development of social legislation. This was a period of rapid rise of economic power in corporate form and in union form. It was the era of Morgan and of Gompers, new types of powerful figures in the world of politics and government. This was a period of democratic readjustments, the most notable of which was woman's suffrage. Other types were seen in the



spread of the direct primary, the initiative, referendum and recall, the contest for popular control over the courts, the fundamental reorganization of city government.

In the foreign policy of the country there were revolutionary changes. In the '90s the balance of trade shifted and the United States became an exporting nation, a significant change. The Spanish War led us across the Pacific and the Great War carried us across the Atlantic. America became a world power, partly by virtue of expanding economic influence, and partly by reason of the new development of methods of intercommunication. It was a time for the broadening of men's vision and the readjustment of their political attitudes. The struggle between democracy and plutocracy rocked the land internally, but the rivalry for world expansion and position was almost equally fundamental and more than equally dramatic. Both of them were heavy with significance for the welfare of American democracy.

These situations called for political leadership of the first order, leadership that might match that of the Morgans and the Gompers in the industrial world, the bosses in the political world, the statesmen in the international world, and that might

utilize the science and intelligence of the professional and intellectual world.

Into such a time came Theodore Roosevelt from Manhattan Island, William Jennings Bryan from midwestern Illinois and Nebraska, Thomas Woodrow Wilson from Georgia and old Nassau. Roosevelt was the product of Dutch aristocracy, child of business acumen and opulence, born to wealth and social position; Bryan the son of a country lawyer in an agricultural territory born to politics and law; Wilson the son of a Presbyterian clergyman in a backward state, born to middle class religio-intellectualism. Wall Street, Main Street and the Old South were all represented in their origins.

The background of Roosevelt in the Empire state was a notable one. In his metropolitan environment, he could observe closely such developments of the new forms of political life as the Tammany machine, and the business group centering in New York. Tammany and Wall Street typified significant developments in the evolution of the democracy; and the statesmen of that time and place were obliged to deal with them both at close range. He was also in a position to observe the alliance not infrequently formed between the powerfully organized political machine and the well intrenched industrial organiza-

tion. New York politics was also characterized by the division between city and upstate, between the urban and the rural groups. This cleavage continually ran through the politics of the time, and caused complications of the most difficult character.

The traditions of the party organization in New York were strong. This was the state of Burr, the probable inventor of the spoils system, of Hamilton, of Clinton, of Van Buren, of Thurlow Weed, of Conkling, Platt, Barnes, Murphy, Croker, of Whitelaw Reid and of Godkin. Aggressive business, aggressive bosses, aggressive reformers or mugwumps were all well represented in the complicated politics of the state in which the scene of Roosevelt's day was laid.[1]

Roosevelt's political career is so well known that little time need be occupied with its rehearsal. His first experience was gained as a member of the General Assembly of New York, which began auspiciously. He soon retired to the Bad Lands of the Dakotas after the early death of his wife.[2]

His ill-starred campaign for mayor of New York

[1] See Gosnell's *Boss Platt,* Ch. I, for description of the basic conditions in New York during this period.

[2] This phase of his life is well described in Hagedorn's *Roosevelt in the Bad Lands,* a volume which throws much light on the characteristics of the Rough Rider.

was an important episode in his life, to which little attention has been devoted.[3] His next venture as Civil Service Commissioner enabled him to carry on a valiant struggle for the principles of the merit system, but did not add to his popularity. He was glad to transfer the field of activity to the office of Police Commissioner of New York. Here again he was able to make a notable battle for honesty and efficiency in government, but without increasing the range of his popular appeal.

"There is nothing of the purple in it" (he wrote of his work in June, 1896). "It is as grimy as all work for municipal reform over here must be for some decades to come, and it is inconceivably arduous, disheartening, and irritating, beyond almost all other work of the kind. . . . I have to contend with the hostility of political machines; I have to contend with the folly of the reformers and the indifference of decent citizens. The work itself is hard, worrying, and often very disagreeable. The police deal with vile and hideous vice; and it is not done on a rose-water basis. The actual fighting, with any of my varied foes, I do not much mind; I take it as part of the day's work; but there is much that is painful. But fight after fight is won, and its very memory vanishes.

"The battle for decent government must be won by just such interminable grimy drudgery; painful months of marching and skirmishing, mostly indecisive; the 'glorious

[3] The vote was Hewitt 91,215, George 68,242, Roosevelt 60,597.

days' of striking victory are few and far between, and never take place at all unless there is plenty of this disagreeable preliminary work."

As assistant Secretary of War he was again given an opportunity for public service, which was terminated by the outbreak of the Spanish War.

The organization of the Rough Riders, and the battle of San Juan marked the parting of the ways for Roosevelt, and transformed him from a militant but somewhat unpopular reformer to a striking figure in the political life of the state and nation. The nomination for Governor followed and by a very narrow margin he finally reached a significant place of political power and influence. Forced by a peculiar combination of circumstances from this position into the nomination for the Vice-Presidency, the untimely end of President McKinley made him the chief executive of the nation and placed vast power in his hands. His re-election in 1904 was accomplished readily, and brought him to his high point in political prestige and influence. In the campaign of 1912, he broke with the party organization and openly opposed his former associates in political and economic power. The bitter controversy with the government during the Great War was an anticlimax to his earlier career. His active

political life covered a period of some forty years, while the period of his national leadership may be set at twenty years—from 1900 to 1919. This extended chapter of activity offers opportunity for many sided examination of his traits as a leader, and observation and comment are well supplemented by his own letters, papers and autobiography. The latter is one of the most significant and interesting documents in the history of democracy,—almost as revealing, however, for what it omits as for what it contains.

The personal equipment of Roosevelt was based on a physical constitution of great vigor and strength. "Every now and then I like to drink the wine of life with brandy in it," said he, when young.[4] While it appears that in his earlier years he suffered from asthma, from defective eyesight, and was not "rugged," these obstacles seem to have been overcome at an early age; certainly by the time he undertook his ranching in the far west. From his early manhood on, he outwalked, outrode and outtalked those around him, and gave every evidence of great physical power and endurance. His physical condition and vigor were significant factors in his political activities, enabling him from time

[4] *Roosevelt-Lodge Correspondence,* I, 36 (1885).

to time to wear down his competitors. The strain of contacts and of campaigning made little impression upon him, and he rose above the physical exhaustion that often accompanies intense political labors. Part of this physical ability was apparently the result of careful conditioning and intelligent husbanding of his resources, but another part of it was doubtless due to a natural endowment of an unusual type.

Likewise the intellectual equipment of Roosevelt was of a high order. In addition to his intense and dominating political interests, he was something of an historian and a naturalist, and in both fields showed ability of a marked character. He was by no means a profound or thorough historian, however, and his naturalistic ability was a promise rather than an achievement.[5] He possessed great thirst for information, with great capacity for absorbing and retaining it. He consumed and assimilated with great rapidity. Not only was his mind well stored, but he was able to organize and assemble the

[5] Of his *Life of Benton* he says in a letter to Lodge: "I have pretty nearly finished Benton, mainly evolving him from my inner consciousness, but when he leaves the Senate in 1850 I have nothing whatever to go by." He asked Lodge to have some one "look up in a biographical dictionary or elsewhere his life after 1850." Hagedorn, p. 399.

materials there found with consummate ability. If he knew little of a subject he was formidable; and if he were well informed he was likely to be irresistible.

Roosevelt's temperamental qualities were widely different from those of Lincoln. There was in his nature little of the brooding quality of the Illinois statesman, and relatively little humility and self-depreciation. He was aggressive, confident, with few real shadows of uncertainty. But underneath the bustling and apparently excitable exterior, there was a cool and collected person, whose fixed purpose showed no signs of heat or alarm. In common with Lincoln he shared a sense of humor, although of a different type from that of Honest Abe. Roosevelt had wit and satire, rather than the parable-like, story-telling faculty of Lincoln.

In the Roosevelt organization there was also a high sense of dignity, in contrast with the informality of the Lincoln. This was perhaps the outcome of different social origins and surroundings, but in a sense it seemed also to have been ingrained in the nature of Roosevelt. He could be and pose as a cowboy and rough rider with great éclat, and could also be the statesman and figurehead when necessary. But generally speaking he expected due deference to

his position and bore himself as "one having authority."

Roosevelt was unusually sensitive to the strength and direction of social movements. His own statement was:

> "People always used to say of me that I was an astonishingly good politician and divined what the people were going to think. I simply made up my mind what they ought to think; and then did my best to get them to think it. Sometimes I failed and then my critics said that my ambition had overleaped itself. Sometimes I succeeded and then they said I was an uncommonly astute creature to have detected what the people were going to think and to pose as their leader in thinking it."

But during the Progressive campaign, after he had been shot, he once remarked: "After all, was I not a great sounding board?" More keenly than any other politician of his time, Roosevelt caught the demand for integrity in public life, and iterated and reiterated what some of his critics called the ten commandments. He felt the rising opposition to domination of government by irresponsible business interests, and made an attack upon it. In this he had been anticipated by many others. But what Roosevelt appreciated more keenly than others was the significance of the middle of the road policy.

He endeavored to avoid extremes of interpretation, retaining the wisdom of the maxim *in medio tutissimus*. He denounced the "malefactors of great wealth," but not without calling attention to the "undesirable citizens" among the labor group. "On the one hand" and "on the other hand" was his usual style of political logic, not always on the same day, but on days not too far apart.

He felt the progressive movement of 1912, and put himself at the head of it. He felt the rising war sentiment in 1916 and endeavored to crystallize it. He did not however sense the resentment against his criticism of the government during the war period. He did not always realize the cold welcome given his many preachments on such subjects as simplified spelling and race suicide. He avoided instinctively the tariff problem and the liquor problem, in both of which diverse sentiments were struggling. On the whole his intuitions of popular tendencies were well developed and remarkable for their accuracy and speed.

The sage of Oyster Bay was not primarily an inventor of large constructive policies. His genius was administrative rather than legislative, with steady insistence upon honesty, efficiency, and practical results. He may be said to have invented the

policy of conservation, in that he adopted the policy of Pinchot, and made it into a generally accepted national doctrine. He invented the American policy in the Panama Canal and carried through a program which was at least vigorous and productive of immediate results. He invented the Progressive Party and the platform of 1912, a great achievement which did not however result in the formation, as some had hoped, of a new political party. He invented the recall of judicial decisions, which he did not support consistently in later years. His peculiar talent, however, was not that of constructive policy formulation, but rather that of the political evangelist and the efficient administrator. Given a situation he could see and find a way out, but he was not likely to look a long way ahead for roads to freedom or prosperity.

In social diplomacy Roosevelt was unusually adept and successful. He possessed a wide variety of contacts and had great success in holding together diverse groups of differently minded persons. He understood the East and sympathized with the West; he had some comprehension of the South through his Southern mother. Yet he was less successful in dealing with the South as is evidenced by the Booker Washington incident and the Browns-

ville case. His "on the one hand" and "on the other hand" policy enabled him to hold the middle class, and alternately to attract and repel the laboring group and the business group. In the coal strike his group diplomacy is seen at its best, as he held the support of that part of the nation not directly involved in the controversy while he played labor against employer; and the more responsive element in labor against the least responsive, as also the more responsible factor in business against the least responsive. The memberhip of the Commission was adroitly balanced by agreement upon the appointment of "an eminent sociologist" who turned out to be Mr. Clark of the railway men, bringing peace as a sociologist where he would have brought war as a union man.

Roosevelt for the first time lost the business group in the campaign of 1912, without capturing the solid labor or middle class. He regained the business group shortly afterward, however. Broadly speaking he did not permit permanent consolidations of any one group against him, although this might be necessary for the moment. He was always detaching a part of a group, commercial, labor or otherwise, and preventing solid opposition against him. This was equally true of his relations with religious,

ethnic, and geographical groupings in political society.

No American president dealt more successfully with all types of social groups than did he, partly because of his rare insight into their problems, partly because of his wide acquaintance with their personnel, partly by reason of his extraordinary energy and enthusiasm, and partly by his ability to convince all groups of his fundamental wish for the "square deal" for each. McKinley was likewise successful in group contacts, but brought this about through personal kindliness rather than through astute balancing of interests.

Roosevelt was endowed with a remarkable genius in personal contacts. He met with a wide variety of types of human beings, and displayed singular ability to meet men on their own ground. He was a friend of Root and of Harriman; of Gompers and Platt; of warriors, cardinals, cowboys, prize fighters, literati, savants, farmers, engineers, big and little business men, common folk and highbrows. He not only met and knew these various individuals, but he understood them and made a favorable impression upon them. His wide knowledge, his quick perceptions, his ready ability in adjustment, his untiring physique, made it possible to accommodate

himself to all types of persons without exhaustion. To all of them he was in the Italian phrase *simpatico*. He did not apparently impress these individuals as a commoner or as a prophet or as one of the greatest geniality, but as an energetic, powerful, friendly person well qualified for the task of political leadership.

He was able to make many kaleidoscopic changes. Thus he might appear as a rough rider; or as a professor of history; or as an athlete; or as an evangelist (political); or as a naturalist; or as a mighty hunter seeking big game; as a practical politician; as a statesman; as a ranchman; but not as a farmer or a business man. And the necessary changes of costume or attitude were readily and quickly made without painful effort or disastrous awkwardness in shifting the scenes.

In the Progressive Convention of 1912, as he said, he "held the hot little hands of disgruntled delegates, crossing a t or dotting an i" until the platform was finally a finished product unanimously supported. He was equally and genuinely at home with the Kaiser, Kid McCoy, Cardinal Gibbons, Jane Addams, Dean Lewis, Boss Platt and "Magnate" Harriman. This faculty in itself was a powerful

weapon of offense in political struggles, and enabled him to break up many centers of opposition that might otherwise have solidified against him. A few vehement and insistent friends are like boiling water on congealing ice; and the many Rooseveltians in many groups were centers of radiant influence of incalculable importance.

In power of dramatic expression, his gifts were notable. This was shown in his ability as a writer, as a speaker and in his general tactics. His literary style although sometimes prolix and tedious was full of vigorous and trenchant phrases. "My hat is in the ring"; "I feel like a bull moose"; "an outpatient of Bedlam"; "malefactors of great wealth"; "undesirable citizen"; "whipped to a frazzle"; "copper riveted idiot"; "malevolent mummifaction";—these are only a few specimens of the type of phrase that ran through his speaking and writing, and carried far and wide, often with devastating effect. His forcefulness in literary expression was not confined to the use of telling words or phrases, but was seen in clear, cogent and impressive reasoning, which gave an air of solidity, character and practicality, with a little touch of vision now and then. As in the writings of Lincoln there ran through his reason-

ing a lofty strain of appeal to considerations higher than party regularity or economic advantage, even though both might be concealed in the argument.

Col. Roosevelt was also forceful as an orator and campaigner. He violated all the canons of oratory, but was successful in spite of his voice and manner. In the end he capitalized even his defects, and learned how to make the most telling use of the falsetto in his voice, of his well known teeth, and of his pile-driver manner. Not endowed with a golden voice or graceful manner or master of marvelous rhetoric as some have been, he was nevertheless one of the most effective speakers of his time —perhaps the most effective, if the test is that of winning votes and support. He made an impression of great sincerity, great energy and determination, and solid practical judgment. Neither brilliance nor its shadow rashness appeared in him, but the substantial qualities of a sturdy Dutch statesman with a dash of *élan*.

He was also a master in the art of publicity from the earliest days. His material was prepared well in advance for the press, and the reporters were never left stranded for copy, or for lack of an adroit interview. Perhaps better than any of his contemporaries he understood the value of sustained and favorable newspaper comment. He knew when to wear his

cowboy clothes and his rough rider suit. Perhaps without the special train, the brass cannon and the khaki uniform he might not have become governor of New York in the hard fought campaign of 1898. The trip of the American fleet around the world; hunting for big game in Africa; seeking the River of Doubt in South America; raising a division of troops for the Great War; fighting libel suits with Barnes and an obscure Michigan editor,—he understood the strategic value of all such devices which a more timid person might have rejected.

Finally there was in the Roosevelt composition the factor of courage. He himself said, "Only those are fit to live who do not fear to die," [6] and he exemplified the maxim in his own life and conduct. The early incident of the encounter with the drunken cowboy in the Bad Lands is a case in point. Ordered to dance by an intoxicated enthusiast with a gun in his hand, Roosevelt boldly struck out and knocked

[6] Compare Hindenburg, "A commander who cannot or will not stake his last resources for the sake of victory is committing a crime toward his own people. . . . To act on absolutely safe calculations or win laurels which are not dependent on courage to take responsibility is to banish the very elements of greatness." *Out of My Life.* To the same effect J. A. Spender, in *The Public Life,* Vol. I, p. 50, discussing John Bright says, "He . . . lived to prove the maxim that no man can gain the highest influence with the British people who has not at some time or other fought them to the death or risked his life in swimming against the popular stream."

him down; but the encounter might have terminated otherwise. The passage of the Ford Franchise bill in the General Assembly in the face of tremendous protests from wealthy Republicans and the party organization was a proof of high courage and resolution. Likewise the struggle with Platt over the reappointment of Lou Payne as Insurance Commissioner was a shrewd trial of his willingness to give battle. The settlement of the great coal strike in which mighty forces were battling was an act of coolness and nerve. When Mark Hanna began his moves for the Republican nomination in 1904 by asking a neutral delegation from Ohio, Roosevelt promptly threw down the gage of battle and won a swift victory. In the formation of the Progressive Party in 1912 Roosevelt showed courage of a high order, for he must have foreseen defeat and perhaps rout. Twice a president, a world figure, with renown already established, he had little to gain by a doubtful struggle at the head of an improvised army, except the reputation for valor and decision which had hitherto been his and which a tame acquiescence it seemed to him might take away. After he had been shot at Milwaukee, he insisted upon making his scheduled speech, even before any examination of the wound had been made, saying as he stood

behind the scenes, "This is my great chance." "When a man assails me," he once said, "I do not pity myself, but my feeling is to reach for the point of his jaw." The Rooseveltian courage, however, seldom led him into rashness, the easy road that forks from courage. There was an element of canniness and prudence in his temperament that held him back from enterprises that were foolhardy. His life was not all San Juans and Armageddons. In the main he succeeded in selecting strategic points where the chances for success were an insurable political risk.

In addition to his striking physical and intellectual equipment, the qualities that stand out most conspicuously in Roosevelt were his sensitiveness to what was going on around him, his facility in personal and group contacts, and his aptness in dramatic expression and action. He was essentially a fighting aggressive type, as distinguished from the more human and prophetic type represented by Lincoln. If Lincoln was inclined to brooding and melancholy, Roosevelt was somewhat disposed to swagger a bit and to be ostentatiously energetic. The common sense and humor of both offset what might otherwise have been qualities incompatible with their political advancement.

Roosevelt's great contribution to American public life was the stimulation of healthy interest in public affairs among large numbers of persons, and the development of a striking type of efficient democratic leadership of a kind sorely needed in the days of popular rule. He represented America in its strenuous, vigorous mood, as Lincoln represented America in its more somber and yet human aspects. As Lincoln's intelligence aided him across the gap of formal education and social savoir faire to a common understanding with men of more fortunate surroundings, with the wealthy and the well born, so Roosevelt's intelligence and energy enabled him to bridge the gap between his aristocratic origin and surroundings and the mass of the community.

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CHAPTER III

WOODROW WILSON

The social and economic background of Wilson was not different from that of his contemporaries, Roosevelt and Bryan, but he was not a part of the political movement until 1910. His immediate background was academic but he was not a militant academician of the type sometimes found in public affairs or office. His struggle as President of Princeton with the aristocratic clubs of students foreshadowed later developments, but after all was only in a remote sense political in character. His political life down to 1910 was a blank, and it is one of the mysteries of politics that so remarkable a master of political finesse should have remained aloof for so long from a world to which he was so preëminently adapted.

The political career of Wilson is one of the most astonishing and dramatic episodes in all human history, and his leadership is one of the world's great enigmas. The political life of Wilson was

characterized by its extreme brevity and by the surprising range of power held during most of that time. For a generation he lived in political obscurity uninterested in the movements of his time, at least not practically interested, and then suddenly emerged to assume authority unparalleled. From his election as Governor of New Jersey in 1910 to his collapse in 1919 is a brief period of nine years, but during all of this time he possessed large powers and during three years of the period, 1917-19, he held in his hands greater authority over men and resources than any human being ever before wielded. Stricken down in the campaign of 1919 he lingered, a shadow of his former self, until 1923, while the giant movements in which he had played a heroic part went on without him, although within his sight. Life events like these are the elements out of which mystery and tragedy are woven in the literary world, but for the analysis of science they present the gravest difficulty.

Why did Wilson abandon the practice of law? Why did he hide his light under a bushel for 30 years while great movements surged around him, without awakening his interest or his response? Why was he deaf to all that happened from 1885 to 1910, politically? If some deep interest in

science had gripped him, the situation would be more easily explicable, but this was not the case for politics was to him literary and interpretative, and he was little interested in its scientific aspects.

The physical basis of Wilson was less substantial than that of Lincoln, Roosevelt or Bryan. While fairly robust in his youth, physical weakness shadowed him through much of his later life, especially during the last ten years of it. Although vigorous and energetic, he did not possess the rugged endurance and vitality of any of the other leaders here discussed. Nor was he accustomed to the shocks and contacts of political life until he entered the governorship of New Jersey at the age of 54. He was not a wrestler, or a horseman and hunter, or a prodigy of physical endurance, although not without some early aptitude in baseball.[1]

Wilson's intellectual powers were of a high order. He was especially gifted with insight and power of analysis, and with the faculty of lucid and facile statement of propositions. His interest in study, however, was not scientific, and he was never absorbed in the scientific pursuit of problems of gov-

[1] As in other cases precise medical history and analysis would be very valuable for the study of leadership, but the necessary data are lacking.

ernment. On the contrary he believed that there was no place for science in the study of government. He reiterates his conviction that politics is impressionistic rather than scientific,[2] free interpretation rather than technical explanation or control. He was not a political scientist as were contemporary thinkers such as James Bryce, or Otto Gierke, or Dicey, or Wallas. He was a professor of politics, but not interested in scientific research. Released from scientific attachments and enthusiasms, and from the pressure of practical politics, he was able to range the world for material upon which to base general interpretations of political events. In conversation he was remarkable for the range and variety of his information and the brilliance of his passing analysis, but these analyses were never embodied in scientific results, although they sometimes found literary expression.

The Wilson temperament was a type different from any of those thus far considered. Its base was neither the brooding of Lincoln, nor the aggressive energy of Roosevelt, nor the balanced equanimity of Bryan. Rather was its general characteristic that

[2] See *Mere Literature* especially. This important volume, unfortunately but little noticed, reveals many of the significant Wilsonian attitudes.

of aloofness and self-sufficiency, coupled with a certain prophetic character. It is basically different from those of the other leaders discussed and different from that of most American leaders. This quality was at once a source of strength and an element of weakness in his leadership. On this peculiar temperament is built the characteristic quality of his career in the political world, alienating support in certain directions and attracting strength in others.

The Wilsonian sensitiveness to social and political currents was notable, and it was all the more remarkable because of his relative isolation. He seemed to catch public opinion as if by wireless. While not without contacts, his chief reliance was not upon a wide variety of conferences with persons or groups, as in the case of most leaders. For these his strength or inclination did not appear to be adequate. But gleaning scanty sources of information, or relying upon general knowledge of American traditions and tendencies, he would come to a conclusion and retire to his typewriter to make it effective. He interpreted public opinion in somewhat the same fashion as a poet or an artist would shape a view or a sentiment.

He caught the sentiment in the progressive movement for something better than rule by politicians

or business greed or a sordid combination of the worst elements in both. Yet he also saw that this feeling was a spirit rather than a program; in fact that it recoiled from a set program and preferred to be free.[3] His *New Freedom* was an admirable illustration of this proclamation, without a platform. He sensed the dragging movements for woman suffrage and for child labor restriction, and came to their aid, tardily perhaps but at the psychological moment for the movement, for himself and for the party. He caught the rising but reluctant war spirit spreading over the country, but bided his time (and the outcome of the 1916 election) for final action. Whether he had made up his own mind and waited a favorable moment, or whether he was himself neutral in thought as well as in action, who knows? Once war had been declared he felt the support that would be given vigorous measures more clearly than any one; and demanded compulsory military service, vast armament, and large scale war measures of the most comprehensive type. It required the insight of genius to realize that the American people were ready for such aggressive measures.

[3] "You can build a flimsy platform and stand on it successfully, provided its basis is in the right kind of spirit." Writings, II, 418.

He interpreted the American and the allied feeling that the war must be waged for definite ends, in his famous phrase "to make the world safe for democracy." Finally he interpreted world idealism in a project for ending war through the agency of the league of nations. Of the compelling force of his interpretations throughout America, the Allies and the Central Powers there can be no doubt.

On the other hand he sadly misinterpreted public sentiment in his ill-advised appeal for a Democratic Congress in 1918, and again in his failure to realize the declining spirit of idealism that set in with terrible swiftness once the outcome of the struggle was clear. After his physical collapse in 1919, he can scarcely be held responsible for his judgment of political situations, for only the shadow of Wilson lingered.

In the main, however, his swift and accurate insight into the strength and direction of social and political forces in America stands out as one of the striking characteristics of his equipment as a leader. It enabled him to know when to act and when to forbear, and placed his rivals at a great handicap in dealing with him.

Political inventiveness of a notable type was forecast in Wilson's youthful essay on *Congressional*

Government, in which he undertook a searching analysis of the American parliamentary system and indicated possible lines of development; but this was not followed up and for many years the field lay fallow. As a student of political science for twenty-five years he was not fertile in political expedients and was not known as an inventor, except by his early monograph. His peace time administration was marked by the final passage of the federal reserve banking bill and the enactment of a moderate type of a tariff bill, but in neither of these was distinguished ability shown, except in the finesse of party leadership.

His war program, however, was of a different character. Raising a huge army, equipping it and transporting it to Europe, was a staggering feat of arms, unparalleled in history. It ranks as one of the world's notable pieces of constructive leadership, possibly remembered longer than his plan for peace. No doubt the main features originated with the technical officials, but the credit for adopting the suggestion, advancing the plan, obtaining popular and Congressional support for it, belongs in large measure to the head of the military and naval establishment and the President of the Republic at the time.

The plan for a league of nations as a means of ending war is one of the world's notable attempts at constructive organization, and is Wilson's greatest contribution to political invention. Here again the general idea and the details of the plan were worked out by others, but the advocacy of the idea and its practical support were the task of Wilson. Judging him by the standards usually applied to leaders this was his measure, and his interest in it and championship of it entitle him to high rank as a constructive statesman.

The group diplomacy of Wilson varied in peace and war time, with greater success in the latter than in the former. Wilson represented the South and West geographically, as against the East, a situation demonstrated with great clearness in the election of 1916. He had also powerful support in the Center as shown by his victory in Ohio in 1916. In the field of interests he represented the middle class with rather strong labor support, but without any powerful following in the business group, especially in his second campaign. He was never able to bring together the representatives of all classes as did Roosevelt, and was obliged to rely largely upon labor and the middle class.

In his dealings with the political organization he

was unexpectedly successful, especially in view of his lack of acquaintance and experience. He maintained effective leadership over the democratic party through all the period of the presidency, overcoming obstacles that had wrecked other leaders and puzzled all. He was able to control Congress more completely than any leader since McKinley. This was accomplished partly through the expression of strong partisanship which appealed to the traditional democrat and the organization, partly through the policy of allowing the organization to have its way in matters of local patronage, and partly by appeal to the general public over the heads of the organization. And of course to all this there was added the prospect of victory, dear to the heart of the partisan, and more likely to be gained by going along with the leader than by party dissension.

During the War he was remarkably successful in uniting all groups and factions behind the government. Labor and business reaped large rewards; the middle class was interested in the crusade for democracy; and by adroit handling all groups were brought to the common purpose of winning the war. For the time being Wilson was master of the situation, as perhaps no other leader had ever been. Likewise he was powerful with the Allied statesmen

during the period of the War, when American arms and American support were earnestly sought. In the diplomacy of the peace negotiations he was far less successful. Whether there was any formula that would have solved the European situation may well be doubted, but certainly it was not revealed to an American; and the outcome was relative defeat. Wilson felt obliged to sacrifice everything for the League of Nations, and staked all upon the mechanism which he fondly hoped would be the great instrument of world peace.

All in all, Wilson displayed high qualities of group diplomacy, although winning here and losing there. His greatest success was that scored with the Democratic party organization and Congress, and with all classes during the War; his weakest points the failure to make some accommodation with business and his inability to cope with the European diplomats on their own and chosen ground.

Weakness in personal contacts was one of the characteristics of the Wilsonian leadership. He produced an impression of coldness and aloofness, intensified by his limited number of contacts. Among his intimates a charming and delightful person, he was unable to project this picture on a larger scale, and appear as the genial friend of the

people in general. In reality he did not possess the necessary strength and vigor for frequent contacts and conferences such as Roosevelt delighted in. They seemed to weary him, and he was obliged to choose between seeing many people and having no strength left for problems of state, or seeing few persons and reserving his powers for statecraft. He chose the latter course with the inevitable result, that he acquired a reputation for exclusiveness and coldness. He himself realized this situation and discusses it keenly in his charming essay *On Being Human.*

He did not in fact lack human sympathy, but strength for personal contacts. Perhaps this is the same thing biologically, but we do not know. At any rate Wilson did not draw to him masses of people who were captured by his geniality, or endeared to him through some subtle sympathy. Perhaps if Wilson had possessed Lincoln's facility in human contacts, he would have been attacked as dangerous because too powerful for democratic government.

Of dramatic expression Wilson was a master. He was forceful as a writer, effective as a speaker, and understood the quality of the dramatic in public behavior. He was unsurpassed in literary statement

of ideas and situations. In graceful and colorful phrasing he was without a master. He had in fact a certain quality of the poet, expressing political ideas in rhetorical form. This capacity was early evident in his writings as in *Congressional Government*, in various essays such as *Mere Literature*, and in his *Constitutional Government*. *The New Freedom*, a collection of his 1912 speeches and papers, is a notable example of subtle phrasing which expresses or evades a situation as need may be. His task in the campaign of 1912 was to say as little as possible without remaining silent and *The New Freedom* with its wide sweeping generalities is the answer to this puzzle. In his state papers he maintained a high level of expressiveness. But in the Great War when men's passions were stirred to their depths and the fate of nations hung on passing events, his powers were resplendent. His statement of war aims was a masterpiece, focussing in the famous phrase "To make the world safe for democracy." His assaults upon autocracy and militarism, and his fervid pleas for world reorganization that would end the terrible sacrifices of war were hailed throughout the world as the gospel of a new religion of democracy and peace.

As with all effective phrase-makers there are occa-

sions when facility is a peril. At times Wilson's flowing style betrayed him, as in "Too proud to fight" which was widely misinterpreted; or in "watchful waiting," which was not cheerfully received. His "peace without victory" speech made many explanations necessary.

The President was also a capable speaker, although by no means a powerful orator. He had the gift of clear and pleasing expression, but did not appear forceful or oversympathetic. His addresses were more effective with small groups than with large ones, and were stronger when read than when delivered by the orator. Wilson was by no means as winning a speaker in political audiences as was Bryan or Roosevelt.

He understood also the value of the dramatic in political affairs. Striking evidence of this is seen in his personal appearance before Congress for the purpose of delivering his presidential message. Another instance is his personal negotiation of the peace treaty in Paris and his triumphal tour on that occasion. The order for the preparation of the *George Washington* for return to the United States in the midst of the peace negotiations, when they seemed to take a fatal turn, was a dramatic stroke that was effective. Likewise his tour of the United

States for the discussion of preparedness in 1917 was a bold move to prevent stampeding the country into premature military activity, and in this respect was measurably successful. His tour of the country in behalf of the peace treaty was a well-designed stroke, in the execution of which he fell.

The career of Wilson was marked by unquestioned courage. This was manifested on many kinds of occasions. The first notable instance was his refusal to accede to the request of the New Jersey boss that the advisory vote for United States Senator be disregarded, and that the influence of the newly elected Governor be thrown in favor of the boss candidate. Another courageous move was his support of Bryan in the Democratic Convention of 1912 for the office of temporary chairman of the Convention, a stroke which won him the friendship of Bryan without which nomination would have been improbable. He did not hesitate to clash with the leaders of the party in his contacts with Congress and on various occasions was defiant of the party powers in Congress and out. He defied the effort of the Republicans to take the conduct of the war out of his hands in the early part of the struggle. He did not hesitate to support the eight-hour law at a dubious time in the course of his political for-

tunes, against the advice of many political friends. His decision for bold war measures in 1917 was a courageous act, and the outcome could not have been foreseen. Courage perhaps more than insight was displayed in his Paris controversies with Orlando, Clemenceau and Lloyd George. Throughout his political career he maintained an unequal struggle with ill health, and finally with creeping death. Confidence in his judgment and courage in the execution of his decisions was one of his distinguishing characteristics throughout his career, courage in fact to the point of recklessness at times.

With his courage went also a useful dash of luck that saved him from disaster. The boss of New Jersey selected the wrong man when he aided in the nomination and election of the University professor who was to prove a pliant tool of the organization's ambitions. In 1912 the split in the Republican party paved the way for his nomination and ensured his election by a minority of the popular vote; in 1916 when the scales of fortune balanced evenly, the unfortunate failure of Hughes and Johnston to meet while under the same roof in California threw the doubtful state to Wilson and made him again President of the United States. In his valiant effort to obtain the ratification of the peace treaty,

the break of the game was against him, and his physical collapse prevented the ratification of plans, the approval of which seemed inevitable a few months earlier when the war idealism was still at its greatest height.

As a party leader he was surpassed only by Jefferson whose philosophy and tactics were in many respects similar. During the brief years of his rule, no one succeeded better in holding together the recalcitrant elements of his own party, and in carrying along elements of the opposition and independent groups. Wilson's greatest weakness was in his lack of physical stamina for personal contacts, which excluded him from many elements of personal popularity, from many valuable political friendships, and which tended to keep him out of the thick of the personal encounter from which Lincoln and Roosevelt often emerged with great prestige. His greatest strength was in his marvelous facility in judging the currents of public sentiment and in framing effective interpretations. His astounding gift of statement enabled him to attract support to a general spirit rather than a specific program, to avoid unpleasant commitments in dubious cases, and to arouse intense enthusiasm for a specific cause. In a politico-literary sense, he was alike master of stern denunciation,

adroit evasion, and heart-stirring enthusiasm—all of a notable type.[4]

Two of the great tasks of modern democracy are the accommodation of conflicting social classes, and the recognition of women and of labor in social and political life. In these fields Wilson was a distinguished leader. He understood the democratic movement in America, and strove to realize its ideals in American life. His bitterest foes are those who resented his steady advocacy of government by the many instead of government by the few.

The establishment of world order and the abolition of war is the next great task of democracy, and in this field Wilson was a valiant leader. He undertook what he conceived to be the war against war, and the establishment of a system of world organization which he believed would banish the shadow of war from human life. In this he seems to have lost. But in his own words, "I would rather lose in a cause that will some day win, than win in a cause that will some day lose!" The greatness of an idea is measured not by its first reception but by its final disposition. The slow view of history,

[4] Roosevelt said of Wilson that his two great powers were "that of puzzling ordinary men who are well-meaning but not wise, and that of appealing to the basest element in every man, wise or unwise."—*Roosevelt-Lodge,* II, 526.

long after the eulogies and the execrations have died away, will give a truer perspective than we can possibly have today.

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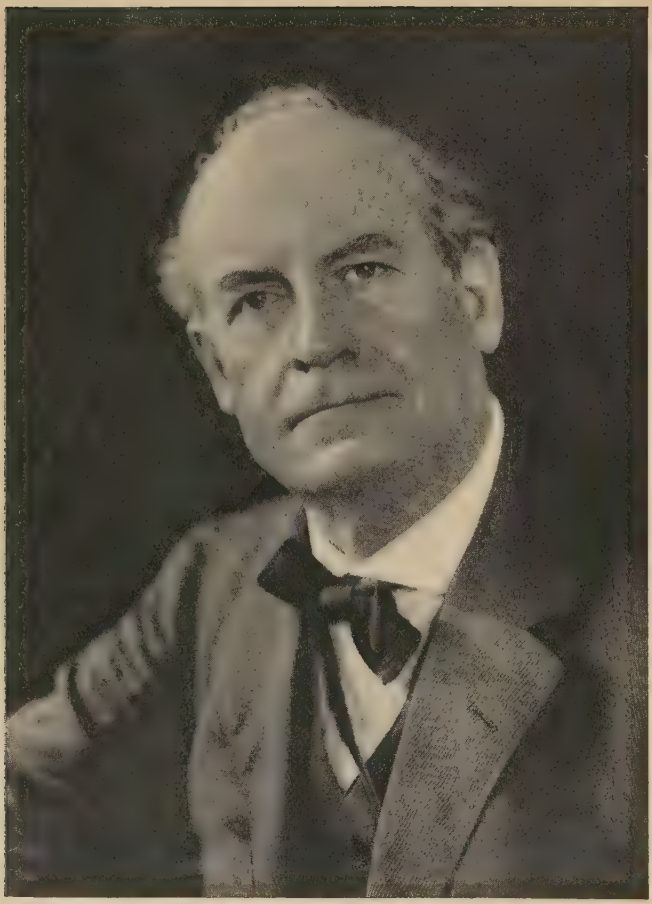

CHAPTER IV

WILLIAM JENNINGS BRYAN

William Jennings Bryan is a different type of leader from any of those thus far considered. Here was a man who maintained himself in a position of very great political power for a generation, without a political organization, without wealth except his own earnings, without professional position, without holding office except for a brief period. Four years in Congress as a young man and two years as Secretary of State in his maturity constitute his official career. Yet his personal influence upon legislation and public policy is written large in American public life for over thirty years. Since 1892 he was defeated in all elections in which he appeared as a candidate, but no one during this time on the whole wielded greater influence over the minds of men politically than he did. Other men have been far more powerful at given moments than Bryan, but none maintained his ascendancy over the minds of millions of voters for so sustained a period

as the Nebraska statesman. Both Roosevelt and Wilson were antedated and outlived by Bryan.

What are the secrets of the power of this notable figure in American political life? How did he maintain himself during all these years against the bitter opposition of many organization workers, against the pressure of the dominant industrial interests, in the face of newspaper attacks, and despite the criticism of the intellectuals? The analysis of this problem is one of the interesting studies in American politics.

Bryan's early life made him familiar with the farming conditions of central Illinois, with the urban situation in Chicago while a student of law, and later with the agrarian problem in Nebraska and the West. He was essentially the product of the economic and political conditions of the Middle West in the early '90s. His background was that of revolt, Western revolt, not so much against the political bosses and the spoils system as against industrial oligarchy, against railroads and trusts as instruments of attack upon agrarian prosperity and upon democracy. Agricultural distress and the fear of plutocracy are the bases of his attitude and career. Business depression fell heavily upon the farmer in the '90s, and made him ready for almost any meas-

ures of relief that offered promise of aid. The specific formula relied upon at that time was bimetalism or free silver which appealed to the farmer as likely to aid him in regaining his lost prosperity.

Bryan represented the West and the South as against the East and the Center of the country, and voiced their demand for drastic measures to help the agrarian, debtor communities. This was the same geographical group (relatively) that had elected Jefferson and Jackson and later supported Wilson. It did not bring victory to Bryan, but it brought steady support to his doctrines. Fundamentally it was not the currency or the tariff or imperialism that Bryan assailed, although he attacked all three of these at various times, but the tendency inherent in the current conditions to establish a plutocratic government. While he shifted the specific issues of his campaigns from time to time, undoubtedly he faced in the same direction all of the time.

Throughout life Bryan was gifted with tremendous physical vitality. In college he was an "athlete" although not professionally trained or particularly gifted except in the standing broad jump. Yet he was never in any sense a sportsman, and was little interested in field sports or in fishing

or hunting. Nevertheless he maintained a very high degree of physical fitness. He displayed unrivalled capacity for the stress and strain of political campaigns, and for political contacts of all sorts. His remarkable campaign of 1896 eclipsed all previous records in number of speeches and in persons reached. This untiring energy was evident throughout a generation of strenuous endeavor which would have torn most men to tatters, but which left the Nebraskan undisturbed and unruffled. In a country as large as the United States, his sheer strength and endurance were unquestionably significant factors in his political fortunes.

Bryan's intellectual interest from his early days in college was centered in oratory and debate. In both of these fields he soon learned to excel, early attained renown as an orator and a debater, and was made valedictorian of his class. His intellectual interests and capacities inclined him toward forensic struggles in which his readiness and aptness were difficult to match. His debates in Congress on the tariff and the income tax in the early '90s illustrate very well the peculiar facility with which his mind worked in parliamentary situations. As a controversialist, he was at all times a formidable foe, not to be despised by any of his countrymen. At any time

a swift thrust might suddenly discomfit an opponent before he could realize what had happened. Not at all a close or profound reasoner, he was nevertheless ready and acute, and disconcerting both in his ability to seize upon a weak spot of the opposition, and in the humorous twist with which his attack might be made. Given the arena of public conflict with the stage set for the contest and he was one of the most dangerous antagonists of his time.

Bryan was endowed with an equable temperament that left him calm and placid through many trying situations that would have unnerved less firmly balanced men. Had there been a test for stability and placidity of temperament, he would doubtless have ranked high. His great good humor and sweetness of disposition in the face of repeated defeat and rebuff under incessantly galling criticism was remarkable. It was said of Bryan at one time that his smile was so broad that he could whisper in his own ear. However that may have been, he remained serene in the face of assaults that would have crushed many another man.

The New York *Sun* said of him, after the election of 1896:

"The wretched, rattle-pated boy, posing in vapid vanity and mouthing resounding rottenness was not the real leader

of that league of hell. He was only a puppet in the blood-imbued hands of Altgeld, the anarchist, and Debs, the revolutionist, and other desperadoes of that stripe. But he was a willing puppet, Bryan was, willing and eager. Not one of his masters was more apt than he at lies and forgeries and blasphemies, and all the nameless iniquities of that campaign against the ten commandments. He goes down with the cause and must abide with it in the history of infamy. He had less provocation than Benedict Arnold, less intellectual force than Aaron Burr, less manliness and courage than Jefferson Davis. He was the rival of them all in deliberate wickedness and treason to the Republic. His name belongs with theirs, neither the most brilliant, nor the most hateful in the list. Good riddance to it all:—To the conspiracy, the conspirators, and to the foul menaces of repudiation and anarchy against the life of the Republic."

But Mr. Bryan said:

"I shall always carry with me grateful as well as pleasant recollections of newspaper men with whom I was thrown. They were a gentlemanly and genial crowd!"

Bryan felt the current of popular movements with great sensitiveness. By way of illustration, he understood the force of agrarian discontent, of opposition to the policy of imperialism, of the widespread fear of plutocracy. Later he sensed the dry movement. He interpreted the general desire for peace, and reflected it in his wide movement for the nego-

tiation of peace treaties. He undertook the championship of government ownership of railroads, but abandoned it after he discovered the stout elements of opposition.

It may be said that he was not always successful in finding the main positive current of national sentiment, but at any rate he found a strong current whether the main one or not. He did not succeed in interpreting Eastern sentiment as well as Western, but his advocacy of anti-imperialism and of the peace movement was representative of other than Western sentiments. In general it may be said that he was more successful in the divination of the tendencies regarding moralistic movements than in dealing with economic movements or tendencies. But taking the period of a generation during which he was called upon to interpret the social political forces, he was certainly uncommonly sensitive to the powerful tendencies of his day.

Bryan was likewise notable for his ability to see ways out of a given situation that puzzled the community. He was by no means always successful in hitting upon plans that were adopted by the dominant forces in the state, but at any rate he was fertile in expedients that were widely accepted, even if not given the force of law. He was an early

champion of the income tax, which was not of course his own invention. He championed free silver as a panacea for the industrial and especially the agrarian evils of his day. He opposed the annexation of the Philippine Islands, and probably did not regret his course. He advocated the guaranty of bank deposits as a protection to the depositors. He contended for the dissolution of corporations in which one half of the total product consumed was controlled. He fought for the limitation of the use of the injunction in industrial disputes. He advocated the election of federal judges, "people's rule" in various forms, and the dry law. Some of these plans were adopted from campaigns well started and others were more nearly his own contrivance.

It will not of course be required of a leader that he shall be entitled to a patent on his political invention, but it may suffice if he becomes one of the chief champions of the idea. In this sense Bryan utilized many inventions, and in this sense he may be said to have possessed an inventive mind. He had more than the ordinary bent for the development of some remedy or way out of a distressing political situation. Perhaps the most notably original and successful of these was his plan for the general

adoption of arbitration treaties, rudely interrupted by the outbreak of the Great War, but the principle of which went marching on. Broadly speaking Bryan was more of an evangelist than a constructor of original political plans or policies. Yet he undoubtedly had a certain flair for the contrivance of political plans, as ways of escape from certain distressing political situations.

Bryan was a group champion rather than a reconciler of divergent interests of conflicting views and tendencies. He stood for the cause of labor and of the under middle class, especially the agrarian group. He could find no common ground with business enterprises of the larger type and was constantly coming into conflict with their views and policies. He was rarely able to make an all-class combination of the type so frequently perfected by Roosevelt. He held the confidence of the South and West as geographical sections, but with many losses even here. He was frankly the spokesman for the groups that were out of the center of control and were striving to make themselves more effective in the national economic and political life.

Nor did Bryan deal successfully with the party organization which was frequently against him. This was not because he was vehement in his attacks upon

the patronage system, for he at one time opposed the merit system, and was usually amenable to organization reason with respect to appointments. Bryan had of course great numbers of friends in the party organization and the numerous battles fought in his behalf could not leave his comrades untouched by a certain admiration for him. The larger bosses of the East and Center were, however, unreconciled to him, and used every occasion to discredit and thwart him. This attitude was not the result of disagreements actual or anticipated regarding the spoils of office, but because of the Bryan attacks upon corporate interests, and his identification of certain bosses with these big business interests. He was indeed in an awkward position, for if he defied Tammany his prospects for carrying a state like New York were somewhat diminished, while if on the other hand he made common cause with the Wigwam and greeted the chief cordially he was at once portrayed through the country as the friend and comrade of a pirate gang.

The Nebraska statesman maintained cordial relations with the religious groups, more extensively and successfully than any of his national contemporaries in politics. His religio-political speeches were widely heard and widely read, as for example,

his *Prince of Peace*, and he found it easy to step from the arena of political debate to the calmer atmosphere of the church and the pulpit. There can be little doubt that much of the tenacious strength of Bryan came from the fact that he enjoyed a wide reputation as a "good" man, and from his unceasing and cordial contact with the leaders of the religious world as well as with the rank and file of the church congregations especially upon the Protestant side. In the heat of bitterly fought campaigns, Bryan might be vigorously and intemperately assailed, but between times he was the advocate of peace and of piety; the adroit and sincere defender of the interests of the church. He was orthodox in religion, between his unorthodox political campaigns.

Thus his strength was peculiarly recruited from the agrarian group, the labor group, and the religious group cutting across economic class lines. He had developed here an unusual combination of elements of support, including both the highly pietistic rural group, and the more irreverent working class group of the cities. The labor group was not primarily interested in his moralistic measures but listened with deep interest when he assailed the abuse of the injunction in industrial disputes. The

agricultural group was not concerned about the injunction, but were agog when he attacked the railroads and Wall Street and were impressed with his fundamental sincerity and piety.

In personal contacts Bryan was exceedingly strong, perhaps unsurpassed except by Lincoln. He met fewer types of persons than did Roosevelt, but he was warmly liked by almost all those he met. The business group is possibly an exception but even here he had many warm admirers and others who in calmer moments looked upon him indulgently as a "good" type of an American. It was not without reason that he was often called the Great Commoner. His manner and contacts were genuinely democratic, and endeared him to thousands who met him in his ceaseless pilgrimage from one end of the nation to the other. There was no pose in Bryan, only a very simple and unaffected democracy. His genial manner, his broad smile, his ready wit, his democratic simplicity were entirely genuine, and never wore through to arrogance, impatience and irritation. If men were impressed by the energy and solidity of Roosevelt, if they were touched by the sadness of Lincoln, if they were dazzled by the verbal hypnotism of Wilson, they were moved to consider Bryan as "just one of them," a

common man, endowed in some way with unusual talents which did not however affect his plainness and commonness. His enemies endeavored at times to capitalize this "common" quality against him, but never with success. On the contrary, it merely emphasized a trait that endeared him to the mass of the people.

On a platform of amiability alone Bryan would perhaps have been elected President. Many earnestly wished for an opportunity to vote for him personally on some appropriate issue, but were always deterred by the special policy of the campaign. For Bryan never ran as a man—his strongest platform—but always as the advocate of some "paramount" issue which he must thrust to the front of the battle—perhaps to his own loss and harm.

In dramatic power Bryan met all the requirements of the leader in an exceptional degree. He was a born actor for the political stage. In oratory he was unsurpassed during his best days by any of his American contemporaries and perhaps anywhere in the world. His "cross of gold" speech in the Convention of 1896 was a masterpiece, and his subsequent speeches were enormously effective. Year after year, in political campaigns and between

times, he was incessantly active in his oratory. His golden voice was heard by thousands of people, on many different occasions, and almost always with notable effect. His gift of oratory was beyond question the most notable factor in his political leadership. It enabled him to reach masses of voters in the face of the opposition of an unfriendly press, and to bring to them an impression of his personality and an interpretation of his ideas. It made it possible for him to play a significant rôle in the great party conventions where a vivid type of personality is readily appreciated by the representatives of the party.

Not only did he possess the faculty of oratory, but he was able to seize upon important and significant occasions where this power might be most tellingly employed. Thus he introduced in the 1912 convention at Baltimore the famous resolution that for the time being converted the national party assembly into a bear garden.[1] In the convention of 1904 he rose from a sick bed to address the convention against the dominant gold forces. In later years

[1] This resolution pledged the Convention against "the nomination of any candidate for president who is the representative of or under obligation to J. Pierpont Morgan, Thomas F. Ryan, August Belmont, or any other member of the privilege hunting and favor seeking class."

he was less successful as his prestige somewhat declined. While not notable as an organizer or intriguer, Bryan nevertheless was quite capable of delivering a crafty and effective blow in a critical situation, and was at all times a formidable opponent in a parliamentary situation.

The Great Commoner also possessed the faculty of coining shrewd and telling phrases. The climax of his 1896 speech was a notable example of this:

"Having behind us the producing masses of this nation and the world, supported by the commercial interests, the laboring interests, and the toilers everywhere, we will answer their demand for a gold standard by saying to them: You shall not press down upon the brow of labor this crown of thorns, you shall not crucify mankind upon a cross of gold."

His definition of a "business man," including the farmer and the miner was equally remarkable.[2] His

[2] *The First Battle,* p. 200. "We say to you that you have made the definition of a business man too limited in its application. The man who is employed for wages is as much a business man as his employer; the attorney in a country town is as much a business man as the corporation counsel in a great metropolis; the merchant at the cross-roads store is as much a business man as the merchant of New York; the farmer who goes forth in the morning and toils all day—who begins in the spring and toils all summer—and who by the application of brain and muscle to the natural resources of the country creates wealth, is as much a business man as the man who goes upon the board of trade and bets upon the price of grain; the miners who go down a thousand

distinction between the man-made man, the corporation, and the God-made man, the individual, was significant. "Imperialism" was the term he applied with much effect to those who insisted upon the extension of American power across the seas to the Philippine Islands. Of Roosevelt he said in the 1912 campaign: "If Roosevelt thinks he is the Moses of the American people he must have mistaken the voice of Perkins for the voice of God." In trenchant phrase often with a little humor in it, he was a past master. Without bitterness or malice in his comments, there was a peculiar quality in his remarks that made them difficult to answer without being forced back upon an undesirable and unprofitable defensive. His thrusts were good humored, or if not, were filled with an overpowering righteous indignation, making them in either case difficult to answer, except in the same rare technique.

The chief medium of expression for Bryan was his matchless oratory, but he also made extensive

feet into the earth, or climb two thousand feet upon the cliffs, and bring forth from their hiding places the precious metals to be poured into the channels of trade are as much business men as the few financial magnates who, in a back room, corner the money of the world. We come to speak for the broader class of business men."

use of the pen. In this he was less skillful, but by no means ineffective. The *Commoner* which he edited for many years was read by thousands of subscribers, chiefly rural, and proved to be a powerful means of carrying on the advocacy of his ideas and interpretations. It is difficult to estimate the quiet force exerted by this modest agency for propaganda, but to omit it from the Bryan repertoire would be fatal.

Of the spectacular and dramatic in behavior as displayed by Roosevelt there was relatively little in the Bryan temper. It should not be forgotten, however, that when the Spanish War broke out, Bryan was one of the volunteers and as "Colonel Bryan" was ready for any emergency. He also made a tour of the world and was received by thousands of his admirers in New York, perhaps then at the climax of his power. The enthusiasm of some of his followers was cooled, however, by his government ownership speech on this momentous occasion. His campaigns were spectacular in the territory and numbers covered. But his life was otherwise quiet and peaceful, devoid of the unusual or the notable.

The factor of courage was a notable one in the Bryan composition. Perhaps an element of com-

promise might have added to his strength. Few men in public life have faced greater odds with greater nerve than he, and this not once but upon numerous occasions. Perhaps sublime optimism on each occasion pictured victory instead of defeat, but this seems improbable. It seems more likely that he did not know the meaning of fear, and never quailed before an opponent or a situation. He was constantly obliged to advance in the face of the opposition of most of the party organization, of the attacks of a very hostile press, of the opposition of the business interests of the country, and of the criticism of the intellectuals in various quarters. He was obliged to make his own fortune, establish his own press, develop his own methods of spreading his ideas. This he did without flinching from the struggle or without even losing his temper in the process.

It required high courage to face the inevitable in the Democratic convention of 1904, when it was evident that nothing could sway that body from its predetermined course of endorsing Parker and the gold standard. It called for courage in the 1912 convention when his famous resolution made his party colleagues hiss and spit and strike at him as he came down the aisle. To challenge the dominant

financial, social, and legal interests of the land as he did almost continually for a generation also called for sustained courage of the highest type. Only those who have looked closely at the situation realize the compelling power of social pressure and the difficulty with which men withstand it for long periods of time. Most men crumple or flee from the field.

It required courage to urge the adoption of the treaty of peace with Spain in view of the approaching campaign on Imperialism, for it would have been easy to allow the treaty to go down to defeat, and make the battle on surer ground. That Bryan was not averse to or incapable of compromise is shown by his willingness to work with Wilson, even on currency legislation, and by his career as Secretary of State. But his courage is again evident in his withdrawal in face of the military measures made necessary by the Great War.

In a time when corrupt or cowardly compromise characterized much of our political life, the characteristics of Bryan had their peculiar appeal, and their undeniable strength. He lacked, however, the little dash of luck that saved Lincoln and Roosevelt and Wilson. If, instead of languishing in a camp with malaria, Colonel Bryan had been at San Juan

and Colonel Roosevelt had been in Florida, there might have been different history. His supreme ill luck, however, was at the time when as Secretary of State he entered upon his great task of tying up all the world with peace treaties—a work on which he had made notable progress—only to find himself in the midst of the world's greatest war, head of the cabinet destined to play a mighty rôle in the titanic conflict.

The outstanding qualities of Bryan were his marvelous power of expression, his warmth of human contacts, his perception of great currents of community feeling, his undaunted courage and persistence, his deep religious fervor. In group diplomacy and in constructive measures, he was less notable. He was neither a demagogue, nor a great constructive statesman, but he was the greatest political evangelist of his day,—a prophet whose voice was raised again and again against the abuses of the time in which he lived. He saw the real danger of the establishment of plutocracy in free America, and the need of effective and continued protest, but he did not see so clearly the lines of advance or the methods of organizing effectively in law and administration the people's will. Roosevelt and Wilson entered into the land which Bryan has

seen and toward which he had led the people for many years. Many estimates of Bryan have been made and doubtless they have been well made from special, particular points of view. But it seems to me that they have not fully grasped the significance of this character as a political leader. His democratic sympathies, his magical power of oratory, his persistence and courage, his sweetness of temper, his deep religio-political fervor;—these endeared him to great masses of people, who would not have been attracted by an efficient administrator or a constructive political inventor. Whether he thought or felt his way to his political conclusions did not interest these voters. They saw many men of the highest intelligence and ability opposing the democracy on the income tax, trust control, and other measures where class lines were sometimes drawn; and they concluded that the intelligentsia were not always the safest judges where class decisions must be made. Character and courage and persistence gave him the strength that others gained from other sources, not so readily open to him. Bryan was the prophet and priest of millions, although they did not make him their king. What his enemies could not understand was that the people are as much interested in knowing about their leader's

heart as in knowing about his head, and that sympathy no less than intelligence plays its part in the great process of popular control.[1]

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[1] Since this lecture was delivered, Mr. Bryan has assumed the leadership of the anti-evolutionist forces in a phase of the struggle between science and religion. It is not within the province of this paper to discuss the interesting problems here presented. In this controversy, however, there may be clearly observed the same traits of leadership that made Mr. Bryan a notable figure in the political field.

CHAPTER V

COMPARISONS

It is difficult to make accurate comparisons of the leaders who have been discussed, but a rough analysis of their respective qualities may be made, and perhaps this may be useful in further study of other leaders, or of these same characters on the basis of more adequate methods and material.

All of these men were endowed with great physical vigor, except Wilson. Lincoln and Bryan from childhood, and Roosevelt by training were extraordinary in their physical capacity. We do not have accurate measures of their strength to show the salient facts, but the universal testimony as to their strength and endurance is adequate for this purpose.

All were gifted with great intellectual capacity. Two were highly trained, Roosevelt and Wilson, and two, less highly schooled, Lincoln and Bryan. It is difficult to compare their intellectual characteristics, for they were in many respects different types. Two of these leaders were legally minded or

used the legal analogy and style, Lincoln and Bryan. One used the literary style, while Roosevelt employed a combination of all of them ranging from one analogy to another, and seeking his illustrations everywhere from the Scriptures to the prize-ring. Lincoln was a profound thinker with rare capacity for analysis and statement. Bryan was far less profound but in parliamentary and dialectical situations rose to great heights. Wilson was not primarily profound, but was extraordinarily gifted with hypnotic power of expression. Roosevelt would have made a good scholar or a good scientist, if he had not entered a political career.

The most evenly balanced temperament was that of Bryan. Lincoln was brooding and at times melancholy, a trait offset by his marvelously compensatory capacity for humor. Roosevelt was impetuous to the verge of rashness, although his facility in personal control saved him from disaster. Wilson was aloof and more inclined to be independent than to coöperate. Bryan was a medium type, undisturbed by all the vicissitudes of fortune, the bitterness of malignant foes, and the applause of his devoted worshipers. He had a balanced and sunny temperament, which served as a significant base for his generation of strenuous activity.

In all instances they seemed born to politics, or at least to have achieved a burning interest in government at a very early age. But Bryan was the only one who came from what would be termed a political family. Lincoln, Bryan and Roosevelt were actively interested in practical political affairs from their earliest days, passing from one phase of public life to another. Wilson was interested in the theory of politics in his early life, studied and taught it, but singularly abstained from participation until the autumn of his life.

All these persons were richly endowed with a sense of humor, a safety valve against over-assertiveness and self-importance, a useful means of attracting friends, and also of avoiding awkward breaks or crises in personal relations. This quality was most conspicuous in Lincoln, whose humor became a characteristic familiar to the whole nation, and was sometimes charged against his seriousness of purpose. Yet Roosevelt, Wilson and Bryan were likewise noted for their responsiveness to humorous situations, and for the facility with which they employed this dangerous faculty in their personal relations. Bryan's wit was a weapon formidable to his opponents, while the humor of Roosevelt and Wilson was less a platform tool and more a medium

of personal interchange. Had Wilson been able to talk to the public as he talked to his circle of intimate friends, his political profile would have been notably changed.

Two were gifted with a highly developed mimetic faculty, but in fact the power to mimic was possessed by all of them. Lincoln in particular possessed a remarkable facility in vivid narration which reproduced interesting situations. But the others were not far behind in this characteristic accomplishment. Bryan was perhaps less strictly mimetic, but was gifted with histrionic ability of a very high order, and would probably have achieved notable success upon the stage.

In these leaders may be observed the transition from the earlier type of qualities, often associated with the leader of the *ancien régime*. The voice and manner of command are not sharply developed in them, while there is little haughtiness of demeanor in evidence. In Roosevelt and Wilson there is evident a high sense of personal dignity, but in Lincoln and Bryan there was an informality of a notable kind. Lincoln in particular did not rely upon the externalia of authority, but preferred the untrammeled simplicity of the Jeffersonian days. Bryan was equally remote from formality of man-

ner or conduct. There were many men in America and some in political life whose voice, manner, air, more nearly corresponded to the traditional kingly style, but the nation followed the lead of more unassuming figures.

It is equally notable on the other hand that these figures were not typical of the exaggerated form of the democratic courtier, not infrequently found in popular systems and in America. None of them was boisterously genial, of the back-slapping, hand-shaking style, breezing through the community, radiating noisy good-will. Roosevelt was the most effusive of this group, but even his "delighted," though often used, was not sycophantic. The highly exaggerated personal emphasis was lacking in the manner of the group as a whole. In all of them there was a certain reserve beyond which it was not easy to penetrate, and in the case of Lincoln this approached a form of inscrutability.

In fact only one of the group, and he the least successful politically, corresponded to the traditional stereotype of a statesman. Lincoln's features and figure, now idealized in martyrdom, were ready material for the cartoonist, who saw in him only the "Illinois ape." His sadness covered the sternness that guided him through seas of blood,

and his humor covered his inner practical shrewdness. Roosevelt's physical equipment never seemed to me to fit him, but gave quite another picture, for a wholly different Roosevelt is found under his physical set up—a personality in no sense bellicose, bustling, squeaky or tangential, but cool, keen, calculating, decisive, purposeful. Wilson seemed somewhat boyish, aloof, with a certain *je ne sais quoi* of the non-social or non-political, and some lack of ponderousness often associated with weighty men of affairs. Bryan corresponded more closely to the composite figure of the traditional statesman, genial, rotund, impressive, in form and feature reflecting the earlier but passing type.

In sensitiveness to currents of political opinion around them, all of these leaders were masters, of almost equal ability. All were gifted with keen social and political insight and possessed high ability as interpreters of social movements. All failed from time to time to sense the actual situation, but in general were able to observe with unusual clearness the powerful tendencies of the times, gauging their strength, speed and direction. Usually, this political "feel" or sense came as a result of many human contacts, but in the case of Wilson the interpretation seems to have been

reached much more independently. Many voices seem to confuse rather than clarify his thinking, and he preferred his own counsel upon numerous occasions.

In inventiveness Lincoln and Wilson rank high, especially in the development of widely accepted formulas. Roosevelt was swift in the discovery of expedients in a short time period. Bryan was fertile in devices, but did not always hit upon ways of advance that were generally adopted and followed. All were, however, of the type which, when the way is lost, finds a new trail that men will follow; or who contrive and construct useful political devices. Sometimes they failed, as in the case of Lincoln's plan for compensation to owners of slaves, Roosevelt's recall of judicial decisions, Bryan's free silver, and Wilson's League of Nations; but on many notable occasions they were able to invent formulas or types of action that were eminently adapted to the situations.

In group diplomacy I should rank Roosevelt first and Bryan last. The New York statesman understood the art of bringing diverse elements together and holding them together better than any other with the possible exception of Wilson. He was able in many instances to organize the unorganiz-

able, reconciling for the time incongruous and even unfriendly elements, recruited from business, labor and the middle class. Wilson was notable in his successful dealing with the Democratic party organization which he was able to hold as a group in remarkable fashion. In 1912, and during the war he rallied to his support a vari-colored array of supporters; but during the 1916 campaign he was not able to hold the support of the business and Eastern group in the community. Lincoln was unable to hold together the various sections, North and South, but cemented the northern group in masterly fashion during the war. Bryan's combination of farmer, labor and church support was more notable than his analysts have usually observed. All of these leaders possessed in preeminent degree the power of combining discordant groups into a political unity. Just what factors enter into this kind of ability, we do not know, but presumably further analysis will more fully disclose its constituent characteristics. Apparently insight, sympathy, constructive intelligence all play their rôle in producing the formula that fuses the incompatible elements into temporary solidarity.

In personal contacts Lincoln undoubtedly would rank first and Wilson last. Lincoln was not

"magnetic" in the sense in which the term is sometimes employed, but drew men to him in far more subtle ways. He gathered men around him by an amazingly diverse combination of joy and grief, by an appeal through humor and an unspoken appeal through profound sadness, in which there was a touch of tragedy. At one moment he was irresistibly amusing, at another overwhelmingly melancholy, at another impressively shrewd and cunning in some swift stroke. These three overtones constitute a matchless combination with a many-sided appeal. Bryan was impressively human, with a sunny disposition, and a fundamentally serious attitude. But his humor was not so marked as that of Lincoln, and his seriousness was not so tragic. His is a pattern in some ways similar to that of Lincoln, but characterized by narrower limits, right and left, and by greater balance, but with less keen intelligence. Roosevelt's range and variety of human contacts was very great, unsurpassed perhaps by any modern leader, and in these contacts he was impressive. Vigor, intelligence, friendliness radiated from him, and gave him a wide circle of personal followers, many of whom relied upon his competence regardless of the particular policy he might advocate at a given time. To many of his

friends he seemed greater than his cause;—a source of weakness, this, as well as of strength. Wilson was a charming and attractive person to those who came within the circle of his intimacy, but the many who followed him did not know the man. They admired his scintillating intelligence, or perhaps revered him as a prophet in certain moods. The Wilsonians unlike the Rooseveltians were likely to be devoted to the cause rather than the man. The contrast between their types of leadership was as marked as the personal incompatibility between them.

In power of dramatic expression all were masters;—Lincoln and Bryan and Roosevelt as orators, and Wilson weakest here, but greatest with the pen. All understood also the art of dramatizing their attitudes and policies, although this was more marked in Roosevelt and Wilson than in Lincoln and Bryan, both of whom seemed less concerned with spectacular behavior. Lincoln and Wilson, under the stress of supreme military struggles, reached great heights of expressive statement. The Gettysburg Address has become a part of world literature and some of the passages in Wilson's war messages are likely to survive in the history of human aspiration. If the more poetical faculty was lacking in the

words of Roosevelt and Bryan, they were, nevertheless remarkable for the facility with which they interpreted policies in terms of pungent phrase and telling epithet.

As an orator, Bryan was unmatched. He must be given a plus rating in this particular quality, a factor in his equipment without which he could not have survived throughout a generation. None of the others was notably gifted with the physical qualities ordinarily possessed by the platform orator, but all were impressive oral expounders of principles and creeds. Lincoln and Bryan, both lawyers, were masters of argumentation, while Roosevelt and Wilson were less inclined to this form of political persuasion.

The dramatics of political behavior were most highly developed in Roosevelt, whose modes of expression were very vivid. The cowboy costume, the Rough Rider uniform, the hunt for big game, the personal intensity of manner, were characteristic of a general course of conduct. Politics was not drab or gray to him, but colorful and intense,—melodramatic even. He was well adapted to a newspaper and movie world. The others were comparatively modest in methods, although none was devoid of the dramatic in conduct and career. They

did not make vivid changes of costume, or eagerly pursue dangerous beasts. They were neither hunters nor fishers, but wore black and walked sedately. Yet in a larger way they were fully aware of the political effect of striking political strokes, and not infrequently employed them.

In courage all were beyond reproach, although none reached the extreme of foolhardiness. A certain prudence in compromise was a factor in the career of all of them. If any be given the palm in courage I should award it to Bryan, but in so stout a group of souls it is almost impossible to discriminate. All but Bryan had the dash of luck that goes with the final touch of victory. Lincoln and Wilson won the presidency through the division of the opposition in 1860 and again in 1912, while Roosevelt rose through the death of President McKinley. Fate did not so favor the Nebraskan. Indeed the Great War interrupted the climax of his career as a pacifier of the world.

In a period of widespread corruption in politics, all of these leaders were marked for their absolute integrity and for their lack of a patronage-made machine as an original basis of power. Their prestige brought them patronage which they used, but it was not the organization and the patronage that

gave them their chief power, however advantageous these devices may have been at times. No shadow of the graft system that darkened the career of so many of their contemporaries fell upon them at any time. Honest Abe was unassailable. The others survived the bitterest assault of the most vindictive enemies without any successful intimation of their association with the kingdom of graft. It is a notable fact that in a time of widespread and shameless corruption, all of these leaders rose above the system of which they were a part. They were in charge of bosses and bosslets, but leaders still.

Their careers give the lie to the cynical conclusion that only graft and greed and narrow vision win political recognition in public affairs. Their success is proof of the survival of fundamental confidence in integrity and high ideals, at the high points in American public life, whatever may be the case on lower levels.

Summarizing, all of these leaders possessed a keen and permanent political interest, evidenced in early youth and sustained at a high level through life. How they came by this is an important question which we cannot now answer. With one exception all were gifted with extraordinary strength and vigor, which animated their lives with color

and action. All had intelligence of a high order, in most cases of an unusual kind. However, this intelligence was not critically scientific as much as it was parliamentary, poetical, prophetic in nature. Lincoln had law as a basic interest, Roosevelt had administration and war, Wilson was inclined to literature and Bryan leaned toward theology; but all of them subordinated these interests and inclinations to the major task of politics in which all were absorbed. All possessed a keen sense of humor, which in Lincoln rose to the quality of a notable characteristic.

All were highly sensitive to the strength and direction of significant social and political tendencies, and seldom mistook the eddy for the main current. Bryan was less skillful in this divination, but was none the less notable for a high degree of intuition. All were adept in the art of group combination and diplomacy upon which organized strength so often is founded. All were skilled in personal contacts, marked by what is called magnetism, although Wilson was less highly rated here. All were gifted with dramatic power of expression with both voice and pen—an attribute without which it is difficult to see how they could have functioned as leaders. But the greatest orator was not

the most successful leader. All of them were equipped with political inventiveness as to policies and situations. They were fertile in expedients, resourceful in devising ways of advance, either when confronted with policies or with men. Keen political eyesight and quickly organizing political brains enabled them to divide and destroy the enemy of many battlefields. All were fundamentally courageous, risking their political lives upon many significant occasions where more timid men would have fled the field. Yet their courage was not that of the suicidal impulse, but the dash of the commander who risks all his reserves in the reasonable hope of turning the tide.

Once embarked upon their careers, all developed the attribute of prestige, and thus compounded the interest on their original capital. Thus Bryan captured his audience with his initial smile reminiscent of past events; Roosevelt with one glimpse of his flashing teeth, the emblem of war; Wilson with his mesmeric phrases recalling earlier hypnotisms; Lincoln at the sight of his singular countenance. And whatever they said or did was multiplied by the factor of what they had done.

It would be interesting to compare these leaders with figures such as that of Gompers in the labor

field, or Morgan in the financial, or Eliot in the educational, or Grant in the military, or Gibbons in the ecclesiastical, but time will not permit of so important an inquiry. It would also be valuable to study the attributes and characteristics of the non-leader, or of the average man, with a view of observing the differential that might appear upon thoroughgoing analysis of the essential traits involved. But such an inquiry will not be possible upon this occasion. In any case a far greater amount of basic data of a biological and psychological nature would be necessary before scientifically satisfactory conclusions could be reached.

In view of the fundamental importance of leadership in any community, and especially in modern democracy, it is of the greatest consequence that studies of the qualities of political leadership be energetically and intelligently prosecuted. And I venture to express the hope that the necessary interest and enterprise for this purpose may be forthcoming in the not distant future. We cannot hope to manufacture at will our Lincolns, Roosevelts, Wilsons and Bryans, but we may reasonably look forward to a more intelligent view of the whole problem of leadership, to more intelligent training of

potential leaders, and to progressively intelligent popular discrimination in the selection and rejection of the personnel of leadership, and in the circumscription of its metes and bounds.

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